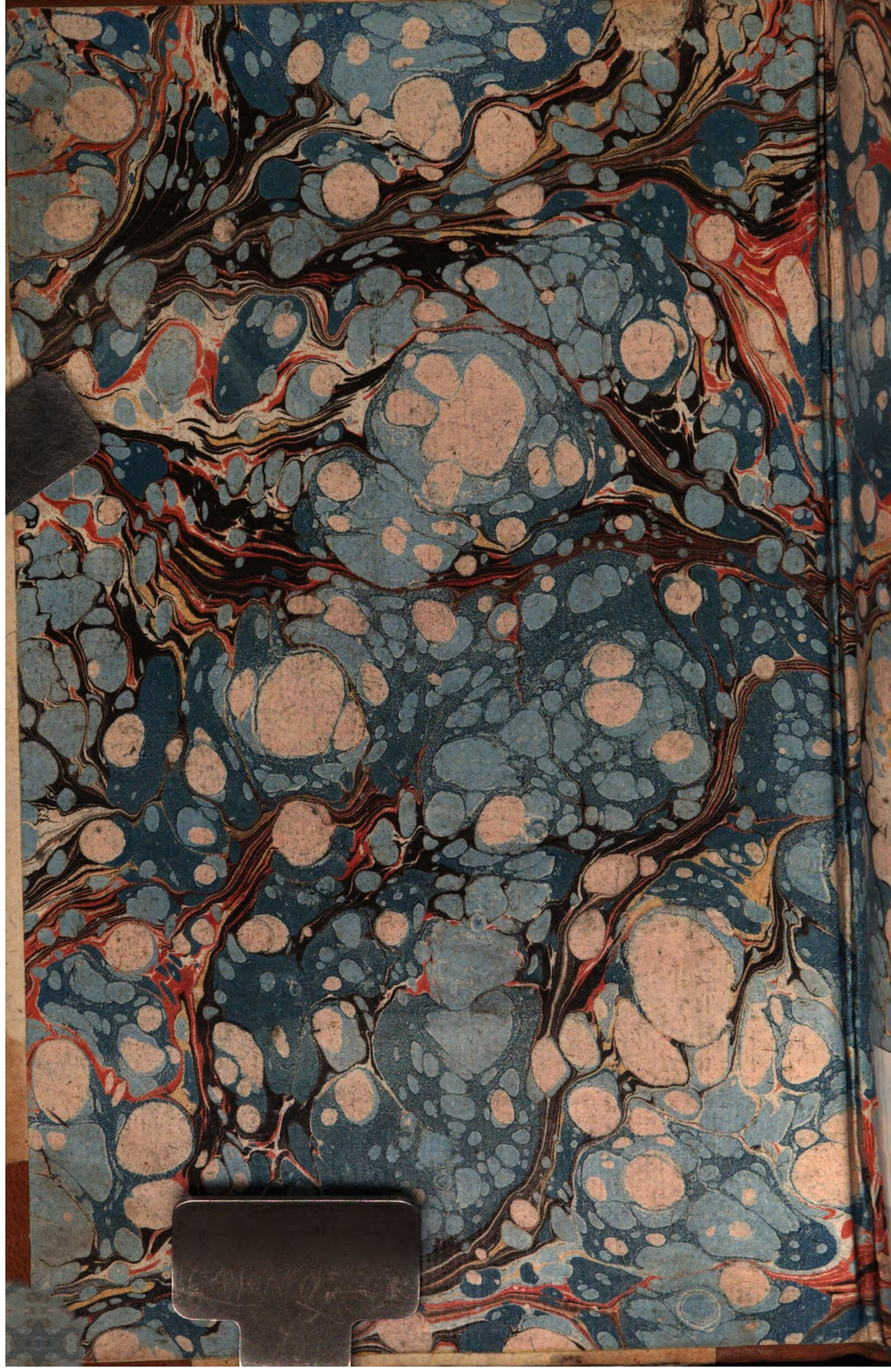
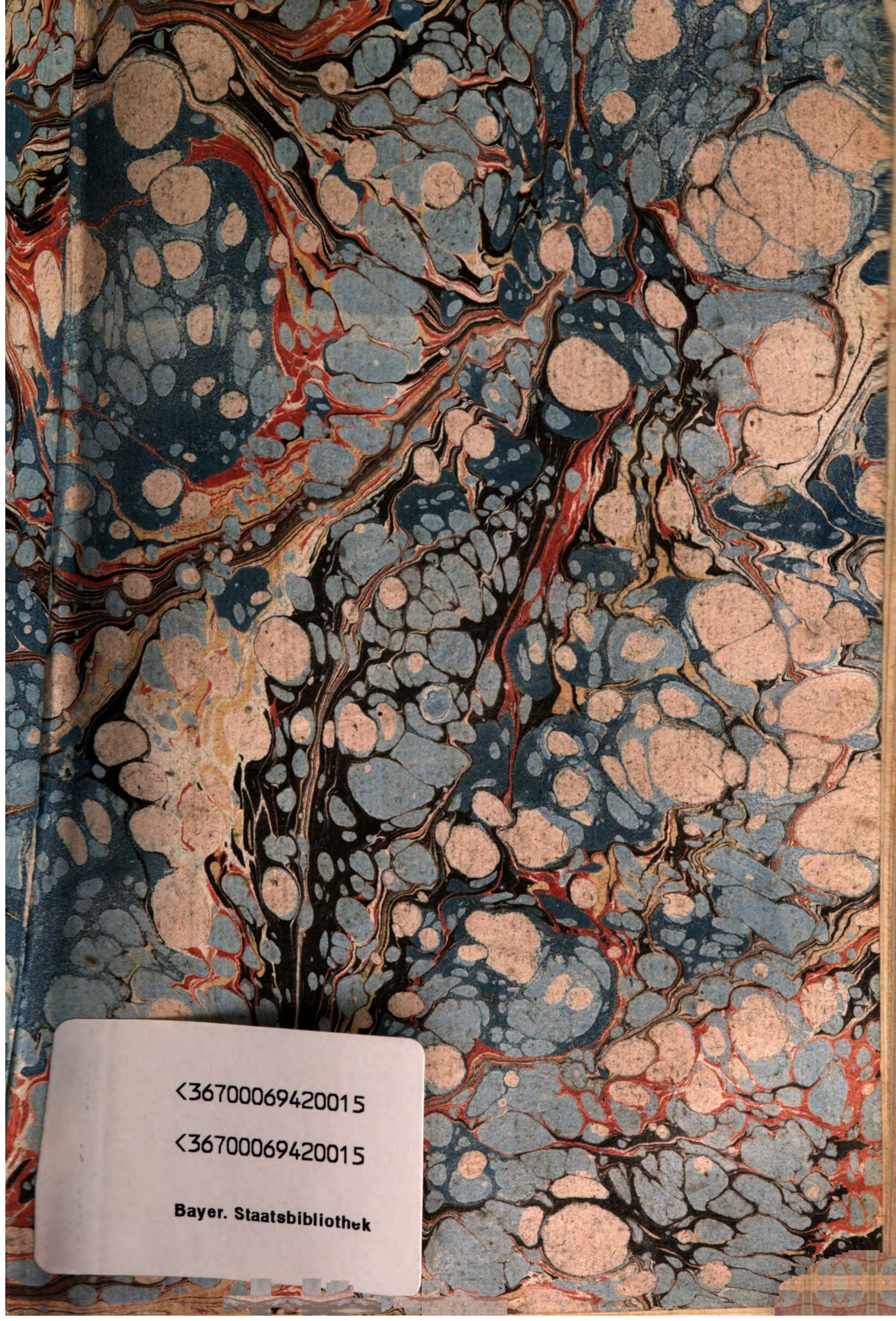






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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
DECLINE AND FALL
OF THE
ROMAN EMPIRE.

By EDWARD GIBBON, Esq;

VOLUME THE SEVENTH.

A NEW EDITION.

BASIL:

PRINTED BY J. J. TOURNEISEN.

M DCC LXXXVIII.

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P R E F A C E.

I NOW discharge my promise, and complete my design, of writing the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, both in the West and the East. The whole period extends from the age of Trajan and the Antonines, to the taking of Constantinople by Mahomet the second; and includes a review of the Crusades and the state of Rome during the middle ages. Since the publication of the first volume, twelve years have elapsed; twelve years, according to my wish, “of health, of leisure, and of perseverance.” I may now congratulate my deliverance from a long and laborious service, and my satisfaction will be pure and perfect, if the public favour should be extended to the conclusion of my work.

It was my first intention to have collected under one view, the numerous authors, of every age and language,

from whom I have derived the materials of this history; and I am still convinced that the apparent ostentation would be more than compensated by real use. If I have renounced this idea; if I have declined an undertaking which had obtained the approbation of a master-artist *; my excuse may be found in the extreme difficulty of assigning a proper measure to such a catalogue. A naked list of names and editions would not be satisfactory either to myself or my readers: the characters of the principal Authors of the Roman and Byzantine History, have been occasionally connected with the events which they describe; a more copious and critical enquiry might indeed deserve, but it would demand, an elaborate volume which might swell by degrees into a general library of historical writers. For the present I shall content myself with renewing my serious protestation, that I have always endeavoured

* See Dr. Robertson's Preface to his History of America.

to draw from the fountain-head; that my curiosity, as well as a sense of duty, has always urged me to study the originals; and that, if they have sometimes eluded my search, I have carefully marked the secondary evidence, on whose faith a passage or a fact were reduced to depend.

I shall soon revisit the banks of the lake of Lausanne, a country which I have known and loved from my early youth. Under a mild government, amidst a beauteous landskip, in a life of leisure and independence, and among a people of easy and elegant manners, I have enjoyed, and may again hope to enjoy, the varied pleasures of retirement and society. But I shall ever glory in the name and character of an Englishman: I am proud of my birth in a free and enlightened country; and the approbation of that country is the best and most honourable reward of my labours. Were I ambitious of any other

Patron than the public, I would inscribe this work to a Statesman, who, in a long, a stormy, and at length an unfortunate administration, had many political opponents, almost without a personal enemy: who has retained, in his fall from power, many faithful and disinterested friends; and who, under the pressure of severe infirmity, enjoys the lively vigour of his mind, and the felicity of his incomparable temper. LORD NORTH will permit me to express the feelings of friendship in the language of truth: but even truth and friendship should be silent, if he still dispensed the favours of the crown.

In a remote solitude, vanity may still whisper in my ear, that my readers, perhaps, may enquire, whether, in the conclusion of the present work, I am now taking an everlasting farewell. They shall hear all that I know myself, all that I could reveal to the most intimate friend. The motives of action or silence are now equally balanced; nor can I pronounce

P R E F A C E.

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in my most secret thoughts, on which side the scale will preponderate. I cannot dissemble that six ample quartos must have tried, and may have exhausted, the indulgence of the Public; that, in the repetition of similar attempts, a successful Author has much more to lose, than he can hope to gain; that I am now descending into the vale of years; and that the most respectable of my countrymen, the men whom I aspire to imitate, have resigned the pen of history about the same period of their lives. Yet I consider that the annals of ancient and modern times may afford many rich and interesting subjects; that I am still possessed of health and leisure; that by the practice of writing, some skill and facility must be acquired; and that in the ardent pursuit of truth and knowledge, I am not conscious of decay. To an active mind, indolence is more painful than labour; and the first months of my liberty will be oc-

cupied and amused in the excursions of curiosity and taste. By such temptations, I have been sometimes seduced from the rigid duty even of a pleasing and voluntary task : but my time will now be my own ; and in the use or abuse of independence, I shall no longer fear my own reproaches or those of my friends. I am fairly entitled to a year of jubilee : next summer and the following winter will rapidly pass away ; and experience only can determine whether I shall still prefer the freedom and variety of study to the design and composition of a regular work, which animates, while it confines, the daily application of the Author. Caprice and accident may influence my choice ; but the dexterity of self-love will contrive to applaud either active industry, or philosophic repose,

DOWNING-STREET,

May 1, 1788.

P. S. I shall embrace this opportunity of introducing two *verbal* remarks, which have not conveniently offered themselves to my notice.

1. As often as I use the definitions of *beyond* the Alps, the Rhine, the Danube, &c. I generally suppose myself at Rome, and afterwards at Constantinople; without observing whether this relative geography may agree with the local, but variable, situation of the reader, or the historian.

2. In proper names of foreign, and especially of Oriental origin, it should be always our aim to express in our English version, a faithful copy of the original. But this rule, which is founded on a just regard to uniformity and truth, must often be relaxed; and the exceptions will be limited or enlarged by the custom of the language and the taste of the interpreter. Our alphabets may be often defective: a harsh sound, an uncouth spelling, might offend the ear or the eye of our countrymen; and some words, notoriously corrupt, are fixed, and, as it were, naturalised in the vulgar tongue. The prophet *Mohammed* can no longer be stripped of the famous, though improper appellation of Mahomet: the well-known cities of Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo, would almost be lost in

the strange descriptions of *Haleb*, *Demashk*, and *Al Cahira*: the titles and offices of the Ottoman empire are fashioned by the practice of three hundred years; and we are pleased to blend the three Chinese monosyllables, *Con-fû-tzee* in the respectable name of Confucius, or even to adopt the Portuguese corruption of Mandarin. But I would vary the use of Zoroaster and *Zer-dusht*, as I drew my information from Greece or Persia: since our connection with India, the genuine *Timour* is restored to the throne of Tamerlane: our most correct writers have retrenched the *Al*, the superfluous article, from the Koran; and we escape an ambiguous termination, by adopting *Moslem* instead of Musulman, in the plural number. In these, and in a thousand examples, the shades of distinction are often minute; and I can feel, where I cannot explain, the motives of my choice.

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OF THE
ROMAN EMPIRE.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Zeno and Anastasius, Emperors of the East.—Birth, Education, and first Exploits of Theodoric the Ostrogoth.—His Invasion and Conquest of Italy.—The Gothic Kingdom of Italy.—State of the West.—Military and Civil Government.—The Senator Boethius.—Last Acts and Death of Theodoric.

AFTER the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, an interval of fifty years, till the memorable reign of Justinian, is faintly marked by the obscure names and imperfect annals of Zeno, Anastasius, and Justin, who successively ascended the throne of Constantinople. During the same period, Italy revived and flourished under the government of a Gothic king, who might have

CHAP.
XXXIX.
A. D.
476—527.

2 THE DECLINE AND FALL

C H A P. deserved a statue among the best and bravest of
XXXIX. the ancient Romans.

Birth and
education of
Theodoric.

A D.
455—475.

THEODORIC the Ostrogoth, the fourteenth in lineal descent of the royal line of the Amali¹, was born in the neighbourhood of Vienna² two years after the death of Attila. A recent victory had restored the independence of the Ostrogoths; and the three brothers, Walamir, Theodemir, and Widimir, who ruled that warlike nation with united counsels, had separately pitched their habitations in the fertile though desolate province of Pannonia. The Huns still threatened their revolted subjects, but their hasty attack was repelled by the single forces of Walamir, and the news of his victory reached the distant camp of his brother in the same auspicious moment that the favourite concubine of Theodemir was delivered of a son and heir. In the eighth year of his age, Theodoric was reluctantly yielded by his father to the public interest, as the pledge of an alliance which Leo, emperor of the East, had consented to purchase by an annual subsidy of three hundred pounds of gold. The royal hostage was educated at Constantinople with care and tenderness. His body was formed to all the exercises of war, his mind was expanded by the habits of liberal conversation; he frequented the schools of the most skilful masters; but he disdained or neglected the arts of Greece, and so ignorant did he always remain of the first elements of science, that a rude mark was contrived to represent the signature of the illiterate king of

Italy³. As soon as he had attained the age of eighteen, he was restored to the wishes of the Ostrogoths, whom the emperor aspired to gain by liberality and confidence. Walamir had fallen in battle; the youngest of the brothers, Widimir, had led away into Italy and Gaul an army of Barbarians, and the whole nation acknowledged for their king the father of Theodoric. His ferocious subjects admired the strength and stature of their young prince⁴; and he soon convinced them that he had not degenerated from the valour of his ancestors. At the head of six thousand volunteers he secretly left the camp in quest of adventures, descended the Danube as far as Singidunum or Belgrade, and soon returned to his father with the spoils of a Sarmatian king whom he had vanquished and slain. Such triumphs, however, were productive only of fame, and the invincible Ostrogoths were reduced to extreme distress by the want of clothing and food. They unanimously resolved to desert their Pannonian encampments, and boldly to advance into the warm and wealthy neighbourhood of the Byzantine court, which already maintained in pride and luxury so many bands of confederate Goths. After proving by some acts of hostility that they could be dangerous, or at least troublesome enemies, the Ostrogoths sold at a high price their reconciliation and fidelity, accepted a donative of lands and money, and were entrusted with the defence of the lower Danube, under the

C H A P.
XXXIX.

4 THE DECLINE AND FALL

C H A P. command of Theodoric, who succeeded after his
XXXIX. father's death to the hereditary throne of the Amali'.

The reign of
Zeno.

A. D.

474—491.

Feb. Apr. 9.

An hero, descended from a race of kings, must have despised the base Isaurian who was invested with the Roman purple, without any endowments of mind or body, without any advantages of royal birth, or superior qualifications. After the failure of the Theodosian line, the choice of Pulcheria and of the senate might be justified in some measure by the characters of Martian and Leo; but the latter of these princes confirmed and dishonoured his reign by the perfidious murder of Aspar and his sons, who too rigorously exacted the debt of gratitude and obedience. The inheritance of Leo and of the East was peaceably devolved on his infant grandson, the son of his daughter Ariadne; and her Isaurian husband, the fortunate Traſcaliſſeus, exchanged that barbarous sound for the Grecian appellation of Zeno. After the decease of the elder Leo, he approached with unnatural respect the throne of his son, humbly received, as a gift, the second rank in the empire, and soon excited the public suspicion on the sudden and premature death of his young colleague, whose life could no longer promote the success of his ambition. But the palace of Constantinople was ruled by female influence, and agitated by female passions: and Verina, the widow of Leo, claiming his empire as her own, pronounced a sentence of deposition against the worthless and ungrateful servant on whom she alone had bestowed the sceptre of the East'. As soon as she

founded a revolt in the ears of Zeno, he fled with precipitation into the mountains of Isauria, and her brother Basiliscus, already infamous by his African expedition ⁷, was unanimously proclaimed by the servile senate. But the reign of the usurper was short and turbulent. Basiliscus presumed to assassinate the lover of his sister; he dared to offend the lover of his wife, the vain and insolent Harmatius, who, in the midst of Asiatic luxury, affected the dress, the demeanour, and the surname of Achilles ⁸. By the conspiracy of the malecontents, Zeno was recalled from exile, the armies, the capital, the person of Basiliscus, were betrayed, and his whole family was condemned to the long agony of cold and hunger by the inhuman conqueror, who wanted courage to encounter or to forgive his enemies. The haughty spirit of Verina was still incapable of submission or repose. She provoked the enmity of a favourite general, embraced his cause as soon as he was disgraced, created a new emperor in Syria and Egypt, raised an army of seventy thousand men, and persisted to the last moment of her life in a fruitless rebellion, which, according to the fashion of the age, had been predicted by Christian hermits and Pagan magicians. While the East was afflicted by the passions of Verina, her daughter Ariadne was distinguished by the female virtues of mildness and fidelity; she followed her husband in his exile, and after his restoration she implored his clemency in favour of her mother. On the decease of Zeno, Ariadne,

C H A P.
 XXXIX.

6 THE DECLINE AND FALL

CHAP. the daughter, the mother, and the widow of an
XXXIX. emperor, gave her hand and the Imperial title
Of Anastasius, an aged domestic of the palace,
A. D. who survived his elevation above twenty-seven
491—518. years, and whose character is attested by the
Apr. 11. July 8. acclamation of the people, "Reign as you have
"lived"! "

Service and
revolt of
Theodoric.
A. D.
475—483.

Whatever fear or affection could bestow, was profusely lavished by Zeno on the king of the Ostrogoths; the rank of patrician and consul, the command of the Palatine troops, an equestrian statue, a treasure in gold and silver of many thousand pounds, the name of son, and the promise of a rich and honourable wife. As long as Theodoric condescended to serve, he supported with courage and fidelity the cause of his benefactor: his rapid march contributed to the restoration of Zeno; and in the second revolt, the *Walamirs*, as they were called, pursued and pressed the Asiatic rebels, till they left an easy victory to the Imperial troops^o. But the faithful servant was suddenly converted into a formidable enemy, who spread the flames of war from Constantinople to the Adriatic; many flourishing cities were reduced to ashes, and the agriculture of Thrace was almost extirpated by the wanton cruelty of the Goths, who deprived their captive peasants of the right hand that guided the plough^u. On such occasions, Theodoric sustained the loud and specious reproach of disloyalty, of ingratitude, and of insatiate avarice, which could be only excused by the hard necessity of

OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. 7

his situation. He reigned, not as the monarch, but as the minister of a ferocious people, whose spirit was unbroken by slavery, and impatient of real or imaginary insults. Their poverty was incurable: since the most liberal donatives were soon dissipated in wasteful luxury, and the most fertile estates became barren in their hands; they despised, but they envied, the laborious provincials; and when their subsistence had failed, the Ostrogoths embraced the familiar resources of war and rapine. It had been the wish of Theodoric (such at least was his declaration), to lead a peaceful, obscure, obedient life, on the confines of Scythia, till the Byzantine court, by splendid and fallacious promises, seduced him to attack a confederate tribe of Goths, who had been engaged in the party of Basiliscus. He marched from his station in Mæsia, on the solemn assurance that before he reached Adrianople he should meet a plentiful convoy of provisions, and a reinforcement of eight thousand horse and thirty thousand foot, while the legions of Asia were encamped at Heraclea to second his operations. These measures were disappointed by mutual jealousy. As he advanced into Thrace, the son of Theodemir found an inhospitable solitude, and his Gothic followers, with an heavy train of horses, of mules, and of waggons were betrayed by their guides among the rocks and precipices of Mount Sondis, where he was assaulted by the arms and invectives of Theodoric the son of Triarius. From a neighbouring

C H A P.
XXXIX.

8 THE DECLINE AND FALL

CHAP.
XXXIX.

height, his artful rival harangued the camp of the *Walamirs*, and branded their leader with the opprobrious names of child, of madman, of perjured traitor, the enemy of his blood and nation. "Are you ignorant," exclaimed the son of Triarius, "that it is the constant policy of the Romans to destroy the Goths by each others swords? Are you insensible that the victor in this unnatural contest will be exposed, and justly exposed, to their implacable revenge? Where are those warriors, my kinsmen and thy own, whose widows now lament that their lives were sacrificed to thy rash ambition? Where is the wealth which thy soldiers possessed when they were first allured from their native homes to enlist under thy standard? Each of them was then master of three or four horses; they now follow thee on foot like slaves, through the deserts of Thrace; those men who were tempted by the hope of measuring gold with a bushel, those brave men who are as free and as noble as thyself." A language so well suited to the temper of the Goths, excited clamour and discontent; and the son of Theodemir, apprehensive of being left alone, was compelled to embrace his brethren, and to imitate the example of Roman perfidy¹².

He undertakes the conquest of Italy.
A. D. 489.

In every state of his fortune, the prudence and firmness of Theodoric were equally conspicuous; whether he threatened Constantinople at the head of the confederate Goths, or retreated with a

faithful band to the mountains and sea-coast of Epirus. At length the accidental death of the son of Triarius ¹³ destroyed the balance which the Romans had been so anxious to preserve, the whole nation acknowledged the supremacy of the Amali, and the Byzantine court subscribed an ignominious and oppressive treaty ¹⁴. The senate had already declared, that it was necessary to chuse a party among the Goths, since the public was unequal to the support of their united forces; a subsidy of two thousand pounds of gold, with the ample pay of thirteen thousand men, were required for the least considerable of their armies ¹⁵; and the Isaurians, who guarded not the empire but the emperor, enjoyed, besides the privilege of rapine, an annual pension of five thousand pounds. The sagacious mind of Theodoric soon perceived that he was odious to the Romans, and suspected by the Barbarians; he understood the popular murmur, that his subjects were exposed in their frozen huts to intolerable hardships, while their king was dissolved in the luxury of Greece, and he prevented the painful alternative of encountering the Goths, as the champion, or of leading them to the field as the enemy, of Zeno. Embracing an enterprize worthy of his courage and ambition, Theodoric addressed the emperor in the following words: “Although your servant is maintained in
“affluence by your liberality, graciously listen to
“the wishes of my heart! Italy, the inheritance
“of your predecessors, and Rome itself the head
“and mistress of the world, now fluctuate under the

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C H A P. " violence and oppression of Odoacer the merce-
 XXXIX. " nary. Direct me, with my national troops,
 " to march against the tyrant. If I fall, you
 " will be relieved from an expensive and trou-
 " blefome friend: If, with the Divine permission,
 " I fucceed, I fhall govern in your name, and to
 " your glory, the Roman fenate, and the part
 " of the republic delivered from flavery by my
 " victorious arms." The propofal of Theodoric
 was accepted and perhaps had been fuggested,
 by the Byzantine court. But the forms of the
 commiffion or grant, appear to have been expref-
 fed with a prudent ambiguity, which might be
 explained by the event; and it was left doubtful,
 whether the conqueror of Italy fhould reign as
 the Lieutenant, the vaffal, or the ally of the
 emperor of the Eaft¹⁶.

His march.

The reputation both of the leader and of the
 war diffufed an univerfal ardour; the *Walamirs*
 were multiplied by the Gothic fwarms already
 engaged in the fervice, or feated in the provin-
 ces, of the empire; and each bold Barbarian,
 who had heard of the wealth and beauty of Italy,
 was impatient to feek, through the moft perilous
 adventures, the poffeffion of fuch enchanting ob-
 jects. The march of Theodoric muft be confi-
 dered as the emigration of an entire people; the
 wives and children of the Goths, their aged
 parents, and moft precious effects, were carefully
 tranfported; and fome idea may be formed of the
 heavy baggage that now followed the camp,
 by the lofs of two thoufand waggons, which had

been sustained in a single action in the war of Epirus. For their subsistence, the Goths depended on the magazines of corn which was ground in portable mills by the hands of their women; on the milk and flesh of their flocks and herds; on the casual produce of the chase, and upon the contributions which they might impose on all who should presume to dispute the passage, or to refuse their friendly assistance. Notwithstanding these precautions, they were exposed to the danger, and almost to the distress of famine, in a march of seven hundred miles, which had been undertaken in the depth of a rigorous winter. Since the fall of the Roman power, Dacia and Pannonia no longer exhibited the rich prospect of populous cities, well cultivated fields, and convenient highways: the reign of barbarism and desolation was restored, and the tribes of Bulgarians, Gepidæ, and Sarmatians, who had occupied the vacant province, were prompted by their native fierceness, or the sollicitations of Odoacer, to resist the progress of his enemy. In many obscure though bloody battles, Theodoric fought and vanquished; till at length surmounting every obstacle by skilful conduct and persevering courage, he descended from the Julian Alps, and displayed his invincible banners on the confines of Italy¹⁷.

Odoacer, a rival not unworthy of his arms, had already occupied the advantageous and well-known post of the river Sontius near the ruins of Aquileia; at the head of a powerful host, whose

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The three
defeats of
Odoacer,
A. D. 489,
August 28,

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Sept. 27;

A. D. 490,

August.

independent *kings*'' or leaders disdained the duties of subordination and the prudence of delays. No sooner had Theodoric granted a short repose and refreshment to his wearied cavalry, than he boldly attacked the fortifications of the enemy; the Ostrogoths showed more ardour to acquire, than the mercenaries to defend, the lands of Italy; and the reward of the first victory was the possession of the Venetian province as far as the walls of Verona. In the neighbourhood of that city, on the steep banks of the rapid Adige, he was opposed by a new army reinforced in its numbers, and not impaired in its courage: the contest was more obstinate, but the event was still more decisive; Odoacer fled to Ravenna, Theodoric advanced to Milan, and the vanquished troops saluted their conqueror with loud acclamations of respect and fidelity. But their want either of constancy or of faith, soon exposed him to the most imminent danger; his vanguard, with several Gothic counts, which had been rashly entrusted to a deserter, was betrayed and destroyed near Faenza by his double treachery; Odoacer again appeared master of the field, and the invader strongly entrenched in his camp of Pavia, was reduced to solicit the aid of a kindred nation, the Visigoths of Gaul. In the course of this history, the most voracious appetite for war will be abundantly satiated, nor can I much lament that our dark and imperfect materials do not afford a more ample narrative of the distresses of Italy, and of the fierce conflict, which was final-

ly decided by the abilities, experience, and valour of the Gothic king. Immediately before the battle of Verona, he visited the tent of his mother¹⁹ and sister, and requested, that on a day, the most illustrious festival of his life, they would adorn him with the rich garments which they had worked with their own hands. "Our glory," said he, "is mutual and inseparable. You are known to the world as the mother of Theodoric; and it becomes me to prove, that I am the genuine offspring of those heroes from whom I claim my descent." The wife or concubine of Theodemir was inspired with the spirit of the German matrons, who esteemed their sons' honour far above their safety; and it is reported, that in a desperate action, when Theodoric himself was hurried along by the torrent of a flying crowd, she boldly met them at the entrance of the camp, and, by her generous reproaches, drove them back on the swords of the enemy²⁰.

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From the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, Theodoric reigned by the right of conquest: the Vandal ambassadors surrendered the island of Sicily, as a lawful appendage of his kingdom; and he was accepted as the deliverer of Rome by the senate and people, who had shut their gates against the flying usurper²¹. Ravenna alone, secure in the fortifications of art and nature, still sustained a siege of almost three years; and the daring sallies of Odoacer carried slaughter and dismay into the Gothic camp. At length, destitute of provisions and hopeless of relief, that

His capitulation and death,
A. D. 493,
March 5.

C H A P. unfortuna te monarch yielded to the groans of his
 XXXIX. subjects and the clamours of his soldiers. A
 treaty of peace was negociated by the bishop of
 Ravenna; the Ostrogoths were admitted into the
 city, and the hostile kings consented, under the
 sanction of an oath, to rule with equal and un-
 divided authority the provinces of Italy. The
 event of such an agreement may be easily fore-
 seen. After some days had been devoted to the
 semblance of joy and friendship, Odoacer, in the
 midst of a solemn banquet, was stabbed by the
 hand or at least by the command of his rival.
 Secret and effectual orders had been previously
 dispatched; the faithless and rapacious merce-
 naries, at the same moment, and without resist-
 ance, were universally massacred; and the royalty
 of Theodoric was proclaimed by the Goths, with
 the tardy, reluctant, ambiguous consent of the
 emperor of the East. The design of a conspiracy
 was imputed, according to the usual forms, to
 the prostrate tyrant; but his innocence, and the
 guilt of his conqueror²², are sufficiently proved
 by the advantageous treaty which *force* would
 not sincerely have granted, nor *weakness* have
 rashly infringed. The jealousy of power, and the
 mischiefs of discord, may suggest a more decent
 apology, and a sentence less rigorous may be
 pronounced against a crime which was necessary
 to introduce into Italy a generation of public
 felicity. The living author of this felicity was
 audaciously praised in his own presence by sacred
 and profane orators²³; but history (in his time

she was mute and inglorious) has not left any just representation of the events which displayed, or of the defects which clouded the virtues of Theodoric²⁴. One record of his fame, the volume of public epistles composed by Cassiodorius in the royal name, is still extant, and has obtained more implicit credit than it seems to deserve²⁵. They exhibit the forms, rather than the substance of his government; and we should vainly search for the pure and spontaneous sentiments of the Barbarian amidst the declamation and learning of a Sophist, the wishes of a Roman senator, the precedents of office, and the vague professions, which, in every court and on every occasion, compose the language of discreet ministers. The reputation of Theodoric may repose with more confidence on the visible peace and prosperity of a reign of thirty three years; the unanimous esteem of his own times, and the memory of his wisdom and courage, his justice and humanity, which was deeply impressed on the minds of the Goths and Italians.

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king of Italy;

A. D. 493,

March 5—

A. D. 526,

August 30.

The partition of the lands of Italy, of which Theodoric assigned the third part to his soldiers, is *honourably* arraigned as the sole injustice of his life. And even this act may be fairly justified by the example of Odoacer, the rights of conquest, the true interest of the Italians, and the sacred duty of subsisting a whole people, who, on the faith of his promises, had transported themselves into a distant land²⁶. Under the reign of Theodoric, and in the happy climate of Italy,

Partition of
lands.

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C H A P. the Goths soon multiplied to a formidable host
 XXXIX. of two hundred thousand men²⁷, and the whole
 amount of their families may be computed by
 the ordinary addition of women and children.
 Their invasion of property, a part of which
 must have been already vacant, was disguised
 by the generous but improper name of *hospitality*; these unwelcome guests were irregularly
 dispersed over the face of Italy, and the lot of
 each Barbarian was adequate to his birth and
 office, the number of his followers, and the rustic
 wealth which he possessed in slaves and cattle.
 The distinctions of noble and plebeian were
 acknowledged²⁸; but the lands of every freeman
 were exempt from taxes, and he enjoyed the
 inestimable privilege of being subject only to the
 laws of his country²⁹. Fashion and even convenience,
 soon persuaded the conquerors to assume
 the more elegant dress of the natives, but they
 still persisted in the use of their mother-tongue;
 and their contempt for the Latin schools was
 applauded by Theodoric himself, who gratified
 their prejudices, or his own, by declaring, that the
 child who had trembled at a rod, would never
 dare to look upon a sword³⁰. Distress might
 sometimes provoke the indigent Roman to assume
 the ferocious manners which were insensibly
 relinquished by the rich and luxurious Barbarian³¹:
 but these mutual conversions were not
 encouraged by the policy of a monarch who
 perpetuated the separation of the Italians and
 Goths; reserving the former for the arts of
 peace,

Separations
 of the Goths
 and Italians.

peace, and the latter for the service of war. To accomplish this design, he studied to protect his industrious subjects, and to moderate the violence without enervating the valour of his soldiers, who were maintained for the public defence. They held their lands and benefices as a military stipend: at the sound of the trumpet, they were prepared to march under the conduct of their provincial officers; and the whole extent of Italy was distributed into the several quarters of a well-regulated camp. The service of the palace and of the frontiers was performed by choice or by rotation; and each extraordinary fatigue was recompensed by an encrease of pay and occasional donatives. Theodoric had convinced his brave companions, that empire must be acquired and defended by the same arts. After his example, they strove to excel in the use, not only of the lance and sword, the instruments of their victories, but of the missile weapons, which they were too much inclined to neglect; and the lively image of war was displayed in the daily exercise and annual reviews of the Gothic cavalry. A firm though gentle discipline imposed the habits of modesty, obedience and temperance; and the Goths were instructed to spare the people, to reverence the laws, to understand the duties of civil society, and to disclaim the barbarous licence of judicial combat and private revenge³².

Among the Barbarians of the West, the victory of Theodoric had spread a general alarm. But as soon as it appeared that he was satisfied with

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Foreign po-
licy of Theo-
doric.

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C H A P. conquest and desirous of peace, terror was
 XXXIX. changed into respect, and they submitted to a powerful mediation, which was uniformly employed for the best purposes of reconciling their quarrels and civilizing their manners ³³. The ambassadors who resorted to Ravenna from the most distant countries of Europe, admired his wisdom, magnificence ³⁴, and courtesy; and if he sometimes accepted either slaves or arms, white horses or strange animals, the gift of a sundial, a water-clock, or a musician, admonished even the princes of Gaul, of the superior art and industry of his Italian subjects. His domestic alliances ³⁵, a wife, two daughters, a sister, and a niece, united the family of Theodoric with the kings of the Franks, the Burgundians, the Visigoths, the Vandals, and the Thuringians; and contributed to maintain the harmony, or at least the balance of the great republic of the West ³⁶. It is difficult in the dark forests of Germany and Poland to pursue the emigrations of the Heruli, a fierce people who disdained the use of armour, and who condemned their widows and aged parents not to survive the loss of their husbands, or the decay of their strength ³⁷. The king of these savage warriors solicited the friendship of Theodoric, and was elevated to the rank of his son, according to the Barbaric rites of a military adoption ³⁸. From the shores of the Baltic, the Æstians or Livonians laid their offerings of native amber ³⁹ at the feet of a prince, whose fame had excited them to undertake an unknown and

dangerous journey of fifteen hundred miles. With the country ⁴⁰ from whence the Gothic nation derived their origin, he maintained a frequent and friendly correspondence; the Italians were clothed in the rich fables ⁴¹ of Sweden; and one of its sovereigns, after a voluntary or reluctant abdication, found an hospitable retreat in the palace of Ravenna. He had reigned over one of the thirteen populous tribes who cultivated a small portion of the great island or peninsula of Scandinavia, to which the vague appellation of Thule has been sometimes applied. That northern region was peopled, or had been explored as high as the sixty-eighth degree of latitude, where the natives of the polar circle enjoy and lose the presence of the sun at each summer and winter solstice during an equal period of forty days ⁴². The long night of his absence or death was the mournful season of distress and anxiety, till the messengers who had been sent to the mountain tops, descried the first rays of returning light, and proclaimed to the plain below the festival of his resurrection ⁴³.

The life of Theodoric represents the rare and meritorious example of a Barbarian, who sheathed his sword in the pride of victory and the vigour of his age. A reign of three and thirty years was consecrated to the duties of civil government, and the hostilities in which he was sometimes involved, were speedily terminated by the conduct of his lieutenants, the discipline of his troops, the arms of his allies, and even by the terror of his name.

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His defensive
wars.

C H A P. XXXIX. He reduced, under a strong and regular government, the unprofitable countries of Rhætia, Noricum, Dalmatia, and Pannonia, from the source of the Danube and the territory of the Bavarians⁴⁴, to the petty kingdom erected by the Gepidæ on the ruins of Sirmium. His prudence could not safely entrust the bulwark of Italy to such feeble and turbulent neighbours; and his justice might claim the lands which they oppressed, either as a part of his kingdom, or as the inheritance of his father. The greatness of a servant, who was named perfidious because he was successful, awakened the jealousy of the emperor Anastasius; and a war was kindled on the Dacian frontier, by the protection which the Gothic king, in the vicissitude of human affairs, had granted to one of the descendants of Attila. Sabinian, a general illustrious by his own and father's merit, advanced at the head of ten thousand Romans; and the provisions and arms which filled a long train of waggons, were distributed to the fiercest of the Bulgarian tribes. But, in the fields of Margus, the eastern powers were defeated by the inferior forces of the Goths and Huns; the flower, and even the hope of the Roman armies was irretrievably destroyed; and such was the temperance with which Theodoric had inspired his victorious troops, that as their leader had not given the signal of pillage, the rich spoils of the enemy lay untouched at their feet⁴⁵. Exasperated by this disgrace, the Byzantine court dispatched two hundred ships and eight thousand men to plunder

His naval
armament,
A. D. 509.

the sea-coast of Calabria and Apulia; they assaulted the ancient city of Tarentum, interrupted the trade and agriculture of an happy country, and sailed back to the Hellespont, proud of their piratical victory over a people whom they still presumed to consider as their *Roman* brethren ⁴⁶. Their retreat was possibly hastened by the activity of Theodoric; Italy was covered by a fleet of a thousand light vessels ⁴⁷, which he constructed with incredible dispatch; and his firm moderation was soon rewarded by a solid and honourable peace. He maintained with a powerful hand the balance of the West, till it was at length overthrown by the ambition of Clovis; and although unable to assist his rash and unfortunate kinsman the king of the Visigoths, he saved the remains of his family and people, and checked the Franks in the midst of their victorious career. I am not desirous to prolong or repeat ⁴⁸ this narrative of military events, the least interesting of the reign of Theodoric; and shall be content to add, that the Alemanni were protected ⁴⁹, that an inroad of the Burgundians was severely chastised, and that the conquest of Arles and Marseilles opened a free communication with the Visigoths, who revered him both as their national protector, and as the guardian of his grandchild, the infant son of Alaric. Under this respectable character, the king of Italy restored the prætorian præfecture of the Gauls, reformed some abuses in the civil government of Spain, and accepted the annual tribute and apparent submission of its military governor,

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CHAP. who wisely refused to trust his person in the
XXXIX. palace of Ravenna⁵⁰. The Gothic sovereignty
was established from Sicily to the Danube, from
Sirmium or Belgrade to the Atlantic Ocean; and
the Greeks themselves have acknowledged that
Theodoric reigned over the fairest portion of the
western empire⁵¹.

Civil govern-
ment of Italy
according to
the Roman
laws.

The union of the Goths and Romans might
have fixed for ages the transient happiness of Italy;
and the first of nations, a new people of free
subjects and enlightened soldiers, might have gra-
dually arisen from the mutual emulation of their
respective virtues. But the sublime merit of guid-
ing or seconding such a revolution, was not re-
served for the reign of Theodoric: he wanted
either the genius or the opportunities of a legislat-
or⁵²; and while he indulged the Goths in the
enjoyment of rude liberty, he servilely copied
the institutions, and even the abuses of the political
system which had been framed by Constantine
and his successors. From a tender regard to the
expiring prejudices of Rome, the Barbarian de-
clined the name, the purple, and the diadem of
the emperors; but he assumed, under the here-
ditary title of king, the whole substance and ple-
nitude of imperial prerogative⁵³. His addresses to
the eastern throne were respectful and ambiguous;
he celebrated in pompous style the harmony of
the two republics, applauded his own govern-
ment as the perfect similitude of a sole and undi-
vided empire, and claimed above the kings of
the earth the same pre-eminence which he mo-

deftly allowed to the person or rank of Anastafius. The alliance of the East and West was annually declared by the unanimous choice of two consuls; but it should seem, that the Italian candidate who was named by Theodoric, accepted a formal confirmation from the sovereign of Constantino-ple⁵⁴. The Gothic palace of Ravenna reflected the image of the court of Theodosius or Valentinian. The prætorian præfect, the præfect of Rome, the quæstor, the master of the offices, with the public and patrimonial treasurers, whose functions are painted in gaudy colours by the rhetoric of Cassiodorius, still continued to act as the ministers of state. And the subordinate care of justice and the revenue was delegated to seven consulars, three correctors, and five presidents, who governed the fifteen *regions* of Italy, according to the principles and even the forms of Roman jurisprudence⁵⁵. The violence of the conquerors was abated or eluded by the slow artifice of judicial proceedings; the civil administration, with its honours and emoluments, was confined to the Italians; and the people still preserved their dress and language, their laws and customs, their personal freedom, and two thirds of their landed property. It had been the object of Augustus to conceal the introduction of monarchy; it was the policy of Theodoric to disguise the reign of a Barbarian⁵⁶. If his subjects were sometimes awakened from this pleasing vision of a Roman government, they derived more substantial comfort from the charac-

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ter of a Gothic prince, who had penetration to discern, and firmness to pursue his own and the public interest. Theodoric loved the virtues which he possessed, and the talents of which he was destitute. Liberius was promoted to the office of prætorian præfect for his unshaken fidelity to the unfortunate cause of Odoacer. The ministers of Theodoric, Cassiodorus⁵⁷ and Boethius, have reflected on his reign the lustre of their genius and learning. More prudent or more fortunate than his colleague, Cassiodorus preserved his own esteem without forfeiting the royal favour; and after passing thirty years in the honours of the world, he was blessed with an equal term of repose in the devout and studious solitude of Squillace.

Prosperity of
Rome.

As the patron of the republic, it was the interest and duty of the Gothic king to cultivate the affections of the senate⁵⁸ and people. The nobles of Rome were flattered by sonorous epithets and formal professions of respect, which had been more justly applied to the merit and authority of their ancestors. The people enjoyed, without fear or danger, the three blessings of a capital, order, plenty, and public amusements. A visible diminution of their numbers may be found even in the measure of liberality⁵⁹; yet Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily, poured their tribute of corn into the granaries of Rome; an allowance of bread and meat was distributed to the indigent citizens; and every office was deemed honourable which was consecrated to the care of their health

and happiness. The public games, such as a Greek ambassador might politely applaud, exhibited a faint and feeble copy of the magnificence of the Cæsars: yet the musical, the gymnastic, and the pantomime arts, had not totally sunk in oblivion; the wild beasts of Africa still exercised in the amphitheatre the courage and dexterity of the hunters; and the indulgent Goth either patiently tolerated or gently restrained the blue and green factions, whose contests so often filled the circus with clamour, and even with blood^o. In the seventh year of his peaceful reign, Theodoric visited the old capital of the world; the senate and people advanced in solemn procession to salute a second Trajan, a new Valentinian, and he nobly supported that character by the assurance of a just and legal government^r, in a discourse which he was not afraid to pronounce in public, and to inscribe on a tablet of brass. Rome, in this august ceremony, shot a last ray of declining glory; and a faint, the spectator of this pompous scene, could only hope in his pious fancy, that it was excelled by the celestial splendor of the New Jerusalem^s. During a residence of six months, the fame, the person, and the courteous demeanour of the Gothic king excited the admiration of the Romans, and he contemplated, with equal curiosity and surprise, the monuments that remained of their ancient greatness. He imprinted the footsteps of a conqueror on the Capitoline hill, and frankly confessed that each day he viewed with fresh wonder the

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XXXIX.Visit of Theodoric,
A. D. 500.

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forum of Trajan and his lofty column. The theatre of Pompey appeared, even in its decay, as a huge mountain artificially hollowed and polished, and adorned by human industry; and he vaguely computed, that a river of gold must have been drained to erect the colossal amphitheatre of Titus⁶³. From the mouths of fourteen aqueducts, a pure and copious stream was diffused into every part of the city; among these the Claudian water, which arose at the distance of thirty-eight miles in the Sabine mountains, was conveyed along a gentle though constant declivity of solid arches, till it descended on the summit of the Aventine hill. The long and spacious vaults which had been constructed for the purpose of common sewers, subsisted, after twelve centuries, in their pristine strength; and these subterraneous channels have been preferred to all the visible wonders of Rome⁶⁴. The Gothic kings, so injuriously accused of the ruin of antiquity, were anxious to preserve the monuments of the nation whom they had subdued⁶⁵. The royal edicts were framed to prevent the abuses, the neglect, or the depredations of the citizens themselves; and a professed architect, the annual sum of two hundred pounds of gold, twenty-five thousand tiles, and the receipt of customs from the Lucrine port, were assigned for the ordinary repairs of the walls and public edifices. A similar care was extended to the statues of metal or marble of men or animals. The spirit of the horses, which have given a

modern name to the Quirinal, was applauded by the Barbarians “; the brazen elephants of the *Via sacra* were diligently restored “; the famous heifer of Myron deceived the cattle, as they were driven through the forum of peace “; and an officer was created to protect those works of art, which Theodoric considered as the noblest ornament of his kingdom.

After the example of the last emperors, Theodoric preferred the residence of Ravenna, where, he cultivated an orchard with his own hands “. As often as the peace of his kingdom was threatened (for it was never invaded) by the Barbarians, he removed his court to Verona “ on the northern frontier, and the image of his palace, still extant, on a coin, represents the oldest and most authentic model of Gothic architecture. These two capitals, as well as Pavia, Spoleto, Naples, and the rest of the Italian cities, acquired under his reign the useful or splendid decorations of churches, aqueducts, baths, porticoes, and palaces “. But the happiness of the subject was more truly conspicuous in the busy scene of labour and luxury, in the rapid encrease and bold enjoyment of national wealth. From the shades of Tibur and Præneste, the Roman senators still retired in the winter-season to the warm sun, and salubrious springs of Baiæ; and their villas, which advanced on solid moles into the bay of Naples, commanded the various prospect of the sky, the earth, and the water. On the eastern side of the Hadriatic, a new Campania

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Flourishing
state of Italy.

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C H A P. was formed in the fair and fruitful province of
 XXXIX. Istria, which communicated with the palace of
 Ravenna by an easy navigation of one hundred
 miles. The rich productions of Lucania and the
 adjacent provinces were exchanged at the Mar-
 cilian fountain, in a populous fair annually
 dedicated to trade, intemperance, and supersti-
 tion. In the solitude of Comum, which had once
 been animated by the mild genius of Pliny, a
 transparent basin above sixty miles in length still
 reflected the rural seats which encompassed the
 margin of the Larian lake; and the gradual ascent
 of the hills was covered by a triple plantation
 of olives of vines and of chestnut trees ⁷². Agri-
 culture revived under the shadow of peace, and
 the number of husbandmen was multiplied by
 the redemption of captives ⁷³. The iron mines of
 Dalmatia, a gold mine in Bruttium, were care-
 fully explored, and the Pomptine marshes, as
 well as those of Spoleto, were drained and
 cultivated by private undertakers, whose distant
 reward must depend on the continuance of the
 public prosperity ⁷⁴. Whenever the seasons were
 less propitious, the doubtful precautions of form-
 ing magazines of corn, fixing the price, and
 prohibiting the exportation, attested at least the
 benevolence of the state; but such was the extra-
 ordinary plenty which an industrious people
 produced from a grateful soil, that a gallon of
 wine was sometimes sold in Italy for less than
 three farthings, and a quarter of wheat at about
 five shillings and sixpence ⁷⁵. A country possessed

of so many valuable objects of exchange, soon attracted the merchants of the world whose beneficial traffic was encouraged and protected by the liberal spirit of Theodoric. The free intercourse of the provinces by land and water was restored and extended; the city gates were never shut either by day or by night; and the common saying, that a purse of gold might be safely left in the fields, was expressive of the conscious security of the inhabitants⁷⁶.

A difference of religion is always pernicious and often fatal to the harmony of the prince and people; the Gothic conqueror had been educated in the profession of Arianism, and Italy was devoutly attached to the Nicene faith. But the persuasion of Theodoric was not infected by zeal, and he piously adhered to the heresy of his fathers, without condescending to balance the subtle arguments of theological metaphysics. Satisfied with the private toleration of his Arian sectaries, he justly conceived himself to be the guardian of the public worship and his external reverence for a superstition which he despised, may have nourished in his mind the salutary indifference of a statesman or philosopher. The Catholics of his dominions acknowledged, perhaps with reluctance, the peace of the church; their clergy, according to the degrees of rank or merit, were honourably entertained in the palace of Theodoric; he esteemed the living sanctity of Cæsarius⁷⁷ and Epiphanius⁷⁸, the orthodox bishops of Arles and Pavia; and presented a

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Theodoric
an Arian.

His tolera-
tion of the
Catholics.

CHAP. decent offering on the tomb of St. Peter, without any scrupulous enquiry into the creed of the apostle ⁷⁹. His favourite Goths, and even his mother, were permitted to retain or embrace the Athanasian faith, and his long reign could not afford the example of an Italian Catholic, who, either from choice or compulsion, had deviated into the religion of the conqueror ⁸⁰. The people, and the Barbarians themselves, were edified by the pomp and order of religious worship; the magistrates were instructed to defend the just immunities of ecclesiastical persons and possessions; the bishops held their synods, the metropolitans exercised their jurisdiction, and the privileges of sanctuary were maintained or moderated according to the spirit of the Roman jurisprudence. With the protection, Theodoric assumed the legal supremacy, of the church; and his firm administration restored or extended some useful prerogatives which had been neglected by the feeble emperors of the West. He was not ignorant of the dignity and importance of the Roman pontiff, to whom the venerable name of POPE was now appropriated. The peace or the revolt of Italy might depend on the character of a wealthy and popular bishop, who claimed such ample dominion both in heaven and earth, who had been declared in a numerous synod to be pure from all sin, and exempt from all judgment ⁸¹. When at his summons the chair of St. Peter was disputed by Symmachus and Laurence, they appeared before the tribunal of

an Arian monarch, and he confirmed the election of the most worthy or the most obsequious candidate. At the end of his life, in a moment of jealousy and repentment, he prevented the choice of the Romans, by nominating a pope in the palace of Ravenna. The danger and furious contests of a schism were mildly restrained, and the last decree of the senate was enacted to extinguish, if it were possible, the scandalous venality of the papal elections ⁸².

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I have descanted with pleasure on the fortunate condition of Italy; but our fancy must not hastily conceive that the golden age of the poets, a race of men without vice or misery, was realised under the Gothic conquest. The fair prospect was sometimes overcast with clouds; the wisdom of Theodoric might be deceived, his power might be resisted, and the declining age of the monarch was sullied with popular hatred and patrician blood. In the first insolence of victory, he had been tempted to deprive the whole party of Odoacer of the civil and even the natural rights of society ⁸³; a tax unseasonably imposed after the calamities of war, would have crushed the rising agriculture of Liguria; a rigid pre-emption of corn, which was intended for the public relief, must have aggravated the distress of Campania. These dangerous projects were defeated by the virtue and eloquence of Epiphanius and Boethius, who, in the presence of Theodoric himself, successfully pleaded the cause of the people ⁸⁴: but if the royal ear was

Vices of his
government.

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open to the voice of truth, a saint and a philosopher are not always to be found at the ear of kings. The privileges of rank, or office, or favour, were too frequently abused by Italian fraud and Gothic violence, and the avarice of the king's nephew was publicly exposed, at first by the usurpation, and afterwards by the restitution of the estates which he had unjustly extorted from his Tuscan neighbours. Two hundred thousand Barbarians, formidable even to their master, were seated in the heart of Italy; they indignantly supported the restraints of peace and discipline; the disorders of their march were always felt and sometimes compensated; and where it was dangerous to punish, it might be prudent to dissemble, the fallies of their native fierceness. When the indulgence of Theodoric had remitted two thirds of the Ligurian tribute, he condescended to explain the difficulties of his situation, and to lament the heavy though inevitable burthens which he imposed on his subjects for their own defence^s. These ungrateful subjects could never be cordially reconciled to the origin, the religion, or even the virtues of the Gothic conqueror; past calamities were forgotten, and the sense or suspicion of injuries was rendered still more exquisite by the present felicity of the times.

He is provoked to persecute the Catholics.

Even the religious toleration which Theodoric had the glory of introducing into the Christian world, was painful and offensive to the orthodox zeal of the Italians. They respected the armed heresy

heresy of the Goths; but their pious rage was safely pointed against the rich and defenceless Jews, who had formed their establishments at Naples, Rome, Ravenna, Milan, and Genoa, for the benefit of trade, and under the sanction of the laws⁶⁶. Their persons were insulted, their effects were pillaged, and their synagogues were burnt by the mad populace of Ravenna and Rome, inflamed, as it should seem, by the most frivolous or extravagant pretences. The government which could neglect, would have deserved such an outrage. A legal enquiry was instantly directed; and as the authors of the tumult had escaped in the crowd, the whole community was condemned to repair the damage; and the obstinate bigots who refused their contributions, were whipped through the streets by the hand of the executioner. This simple act of justice exasperated the discontent of the Catholics, who applauded the merit and patience of these holy confessors; three hundred pulpits deplored the persecution of the church, and if the chapel of St. Stephen at Verona was demolished by the command of Theodoric, it is probable that some miracle hostile to his name and dignity had been performed on that sacred theatre. At the close of a glorious life, the king of Italy discovered that he had excited the hatred of a people whose happiness he had so assiduously laboured to promote; and his mind was soured by indignation, jealousy, and the bitterness of unrequited love. The Gothic conqueror condescended to disarm the unwarlike natives of Italy,

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interdicting all weapons, of offence, and excepting only a small knife for domestic use. The deliverer of Rome was accused of conspiring with the vilest informers against the lives of senators whom he suspected of a secret and treasonable correspondence with the Byzantine court⁸⁷. After the death of Anastasius, the diadem had been placed on the head of a feeble old man; but the powers of government were assumed by his nephew Justinian, who already meditated the extirpation of heresy, and the conquest of Italy and Africa. A rigorous law which was published at Constantinople, to reduce, the Arians by the dread of punishment within the pale of the church, awakened the just resentment of Theodoric, who claimed for his distressed brethren of the East, the same indulgence which he had so long granted to the Catholics of his dominions. At his stern command, the Roman pontiff, with four *illustrious* senators, embarked on an embassy, of which he must have alike dreaded the failure or the success. The singular veneration shewn to the first pope who had visited Constantinople was punished as a crime by his jealous monarch; the artful or peremptory refusal of the Byzantine court might excuse an equal, and would provoke a larger, measure of retaliation; and a mandate was prepared in Italy to prohibit, after a stated day, the exercise of the Catholic worship. By the bigotry of his subjects and enemies, the most tolerant of princes was driven to the brink of persecution; and the life of Theodoric was too long, since he lived to

condemn the virtue of Boethius and Symmachus⁸⁸. C H A P.

The senator Boethius⁸⁹ is the last of the Romans whom Cato or Tully could have acknowledged for their countryman. As a wealthy orphan, he inherited the patrimony and honours of the Anician family, a name ambitiously assumed by the kings and emperors of the age; and the appellation of Manlius asserted his genuine or fabulous descent from a race of consuls and dictators, who had repulsed the Gauls from the Capitol, and sacrificed their sons to the discipline of the republic. In the youth of Boethius, the studies of Rome were not totally abandoned; a Virgil⁹⁰ is now extant, corrected by the hand of a consul; and the professors of grammar, rhetoric, and jurisprudence, were maintained in their privileges and pensions, by the liberality of the Goths. But the erudition of the Latin language was insufficient to satiate his ardent curiosity; and Boethius is said to have employed eighteen laborious years in the schools of Athens⁹¹, which were supported by the zeal, the learning, and the diligence of Proclus and his disciples. The reason and piety of their Roman pupil were fortunately saved from the contagion of mystery and magic, which polluted the groves of the academy; but he imbibed the spirit, and imitated the method of his dead and living masters, who attempted to reconcile the strong and subtle sense of Aristotle with the devout contemplation and sublime fancy of Plato. After his return to Rome, and his marriage with the daughter of his friend, the patrician Symmachus,

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Character,
studies, and
honours of
Boethius.

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Boethius still continued, in a palace of ivory and marble, to prosecute the same studies⁹². The church was edified by his profound defence of the orthodox creed against the Arian, the Eutychian, and the Nestorian heresies; and the Catholic unity was explained or exposed in a formal treatise by the *indifference* of three distinct though consubstantial persons. For the benefit of his Latin readers, his genius submitted to teach the first elements of the arts and sciences of Greece. The geometry of Euclid, the music of Pythagoras, the arithmetic of Nicomachus, the mechanics of Archimedes, the astronomy of Ptolemy, the theology of Plato, and the logic of Aristotle, with the commentary of Porphyry, were translated and illustrated by the indefatigable pen of the Roman senator. And he alone was esteemed capable of describing the wonders of art, a sun-dial, a water-clock, or a sphere which represented the motions of the planets. From these abstruse speculations, Boethius stooped, or to speak more truly, he rose to the social duties of public and private life: the indigent were relieved by his liberality; and his eloquence, which flattery might compare to the voice of Demosthenes or Cicero, was uniformly exerted in the cause of innocence and humanity. Such conspicuous merit was felt and rewarded by a discerning prince; the dignity of Boethius was adorned with the titles of consul and patrician, and his talents were usefully employed in the important station of master of the offices. Notwithstanding the equal claims of the East and West, his two sons were

created, in their tender youth, the consuls of the same year.⁹³ On the memorable day of their inauguration, they proceeded in solemn pomp from their palace to the forum, amidst the applause of the senate and people; and their joyful father, the true consul of Rome, after pronouncing an oration in the praise of his royal benefactor, distributed a triumphal largess in the games of the circus. Prosperous in his fame and fortunes, in his public honours and private alliances, in the cultivation of science and the consciousness of virtue, Boethius might have been styled happy, if that precarious epithet could be safely applied before the last term of the life of man.

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A philosopher, liberal of his wealth and parsimonious of his time, might be insensible to the common allurements of ambition, the thirst of gold and employment. And some credit may be due to the asseveration of Boethius, that he had reluctantly obeyed the divine Plato, who enjoins every virtuous citizen to rescue the state from the usurpation of vice and ignorance. For the integrity of his public conduct he appeals to the memory of his country. His authority had restrained the pride and oppression of the royal officers, and his eloquence had delivered Paulianus from the dogs of the palace. He had always pitied, and often relieved the distress of the provincials, whose fortunes were exhausted by public and private rapine; and Boethius alone had courage to oppose the tyranny of the Barbarians, elated by conquest, excited by avarice, and, as he complains, encour-

His patriotism.

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aged by impunity. In these honourable contests, his spirit soared above the consideration of danger, and perhaps of prudence; and we may learn from the example of Cato, that a character of pure and inflexible virtue is the most apt to be misled by prejudice, to be heated by enthusiasm, and to confound private enmities with public justice. The disciple of Plato might exaggerate the infirmities of nature, and the imperfections of society; and the mildest form of a Gothic kingdom, even the weight of allegiance and gratitude, must be insupportable to the free spirit of a Roman patriot. But the favour and fidelity of Boethius declined in just proportion with the public happiness; and an unworthy colleague was imposed, to divide and controul the power of the master of the offices. In the last gloomy season of Theodoric, he indignantly felt that he was a slave; but as his master had only power over his life, he stood without arms and without fear against the face of an angry Barbarian, who had been provoked to believe that the safety of the senate was incompatible with his own. The senator Albinus was accused and already convicted on the presumption of *hoping*, as it was said, the liberty of Rome. "If Albinus be criminal," exclaimed the orator, "the senate and myself are all guilty of the same crime. If we are innocent, Albinus is equally entitled to the protection of the laws." These laws might not have punished the simple and barren wish of an unattainable blessing; but they would have shewn less indulgence to the rash

He is accused
of treason.

confession of Boethius, that, had he known of a conspiracy, the tyrant never should⁹⁴. The advocate of Albinus was soon involved in the danger and perhaps the guilt of his client; their signature (which they denied as a forgery) was affixed to the original address, inviting the emperor to deliver Italy from the Goths; and three witnesses of honourable rank, perhaps of infamous reputation, attested the treasonable designs of the Roman patrician⁹⁵. Yet his innocence must be presumed, since he was deprived by Theodoric of the means of justification, and rigorously confined in the tower of Pavia, while the senate, at the distance of five hundred miles, pronounced a sentence of confiscation and death against the most illustrious of its members. At the command of the Barbarians, the occult science of a philosopher was stigmatized with the names of sacrilege and magic⁹⁶. A devout and dutiful attachment to the senate was condemned as criminal by the trembling voices of the senators themselves; and their ingratitude deserved the wish or prediction of Boethius, that, after him, none should be found guilty of the same offence⁹⁷.

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While Boethius, oppressed with fetters, expected each moment the sentence or the stroke of death, he composed in the tower of Pavia the *consolation of philosophy*; a golden volume, not unworthy of the leisure of Plato or Tully, but which claims incomparable merit from the barbarism of the times and the situation of the author. The celestial guide whom he had so long in-

His imprisonment and death,
A. D. 524,

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voked at Rome and Athens, now condescended to illumine his dungeon, to revive his courage, and to pour into his wounds her salutary balm. She taught him to compare his long prosperity and his recent distress, and to conceive new hopes from the inconstancy of fortune. Reason had informed him of the precarious condition of her gifts; experience had satisfied him of their real value; he had enjoyed them without guilt; he might resign them without a sigh, and calmly disdain the impotent malice of his enemies, who had left him happiness, since they had left him virtue. From the earth, Boethius ascended to heaven in search of the SUPREME GOOD; explored the metaphysical labyrinth of chance and destiny, of prescience and free-will, of time and eternity; and generously attempted to reconcile the perfect attributes of the Deity, with the apparent disorders of his moral and physical government. Such topics of consolation, so obvious, so vague, or so abstruse, are ineffectual to subdue the feelings of human nature. Yet the sense of misfortune may be diverted by the labour of thought; and the sage who could artfully combine in the same work, the various riches of philosophy, poetry, and eloquence, must already have possessed the intrepid calmness, which he affected to seek. Suspense, the worst of evils was at length determined by the ministers of death, who executed, and perhaps exceeded, the inhuman mandate of Theodoric. A strong cord was fastened round

the head of Boethius, and forcibly tightened, till his eyes almost started from their sockets; and some mercy may be discovered in the milder torture of beating him with clubs till he expired⁹⁸. But his genius survived to diffuse a ray of knowledge over the darkest ages of the Latin world; the writings of the philosopher were translated by the most glorious of the English kings⁹⁹, and the third emperor of the name of Otho removed to a more honourable tomb the bones of a Catholic saint, who, from his Arian persecutors, had acquired the honours of martyrdom, and the fame of miracles¹⁰⁰. In the last hours of Boethius, he derived some comfort from the safety of his two sons, of his wife, and of his father-in-law, the venerable Symmachus. But the grief of Symmachus was indiscreet, and perhaps disrespectful: he had presumed to lament: he might dare to revenge, the death of an injured friend. He was dragged in chains from Rome to the palace of Ravenna; and the suspicions of Theodoric could only be appeased by the blood of an innocent and aged senator¹⁰¹.

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Death of
Symmachus,
A. D. 525.

Humanity will be disposed to encourage any report which testifies the jurisdiction of conscience and the remorse of kings; and philosophy is not ignorant that the most horrid spectres are sometimes created by the powers of a disordered fancy, and the weakness of a distempered body. After a life of virtue and glory, Theodoric was now descending with shame and guilt into the grave: his mind was humbled by the contrast of

Remorse and
death of
Theodoric,
A. D. 526.
August 30.

CHAP. the past, and justly alarmed by the invisible
 XXXIX. terrors of futurity. One evening, as it is related, when the head of a large fish was served on the royal table ¹⁰², he suddenly exclaimed that he beheld the angry countenance of Symmachus, his eyes glaring fury and revenge, and his mouth armed with long sharp teeth, which threatened to devour him. The monarch instantly retired to his chamber, and, as he lay, trembling with aguish cold, under a weight of bed-clothes, he expressed in broken murmurs to his physician Elpidius, his deep repentance for the murders of Boethius and Symmachus ¹⁰³. His malady encreased, and after a dysentery which continued three days, he expired in the palace of Ravenna, in the thirty-third, or, if we compute from the invasion of Italy, in the thirty-seventh year of his reign. Conscious of his approaching end, he divided his treasures and provinces between his two grandsons, and fixed the Rhone as their common boundary ¹⁰⁴. Amalaric was restored to the throne of Spain. Italy, with all the conquests of the Ostrogoths, was bequeathed to Athalaric; whose age did not exceed ten years, but who was cherished as the last male offspring of the line of Amali, by the short-lived marriage of his mother Amalasuntha, with a royal fugitive of the same blood ¹⁰⁵. In the presence of the dying monarch, the Gothic chiefs and Italian magistrates mutually engaged their faith and loyalty to the young prince, and to his guardian mother; and received in the same awful moment, his last

salutary advice, to maintain the laws, to love the senate and people of Rome, and to cultivate with decent reverence the friendship of the emperor¹⁰⁶. The monument of Theodoric was erected by his daughter Amalafuntha, in a conspicuous situation, which commanded the city of Ravenna, the harbour, and the adjacent coast. A chapel of a circular form, thirty feet in diameter, is crowned by a dome of one entire piece of granite: from the centre of the dome, four columns arose, which supported, in a vase of porphyry, the remains of the Gothic king, surrounded by the brazen statues of the twelve apostles¹⁰⁷. His spirit, after some previous expiation, might have been permitted to mingle with the benefactors of mankind, if an Italian hermit had not been witness in a vision to the damnation of Theodoric¹⁰⁸, whose soul was plunged, by the ministers of divine vengeance, into the vulcano of Lipari one of the flaming mouths of the infernal world¹⁰⁹.

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Elevation of Justin the Elder. — Reign of Justinian:—

I. The Empress Theodora. — II. Factions of the Circus, and Sedition of Constantinople. III. Trade and Manufacture of Silk. — IV. Finances and Taxes. — V. Edifices of Justinian. — Church of St. Sophia. — Fortifications and Frontiers of the Eastern Empire. — Abolition of the Schools of Athens, and the Consulship of Rome.

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XL.

Birth of the
emperor

Justinian,

A. D. 481,

May —or

A. D. 483,

May 11.

THE emperor Justinian was born¹ near the ruins of Sardica (the modern Sophia), of an obscure race² of Barbarians³ the inhabitants of a wild and desolate country, to which the names of Dardania, of Dacia, and of Bulgaria, have been successively applied. His elevation was prepared by the adventurous spirit of his uncle Justin, who, with two other peasants of the same village, deserted, for the profession of arms, the more useful employment of husbandmen or shepherds⁴. On foot, with a scanty provision of biscuit in their knapsacks, the three youths followed the high-road of Constantinople, and were soon enrolled, for their strength and stature, among the guards of the emperor Leo. Under the two succeeding reigns, the fortunate peasant emerged to wealth and honours, and his escape from some dangers which threatened his life, was afterwards

ascribed to the guardian angel who watches over the fate of kings. His long and laudable service in the Isaurian and Persian wars, would not have preserved from oblivion the name of Justin; yet they might warrant the military promotion, which in the course of fifty years he gradually obtained; the rank of tribune, of count, and of general, the dignity of senator, and the command of the guards, who obeyed him as their chief, at the important crisis when the emperor Anastasius was removed from the world. The powerful kinsmen whom he had raised and enriched, were excluded from the throne; and the eunuch Amantius, who reigned in the palace, had secretly resolved to fix the diadem on the head of the most obsequious of his creatures. A liberal donative, to conciliate the suffrage of the guards, was entrusted for that purpose in the hands of their commander. But these weighty arguments were treacherously employed by Justin in his own favour; and as no competitor presumed to appear, the Dacian peasant was invested with the purple, by the unanimous consent of the soldiers who knew him to be brave and gentle, of the clergy and people who believed him to be orthodox, and of the provincials who yielded a blind and implicit submission to the will of the capital. The elder Justin, as he is distinguished from another emperor of the same family and name, ascended the Byzantine throne at the age of sixty-eight years; and, had he been left to his own guidance, every moment of a nine years

Elevation
and reign of
his uncle
Justin I.
A. D. 518,
July 10;
A. D. 527,
April 1—or
August 1.

C H A P. XL. reign must have exposed to his subjects the impropriety of their choice. His ignorance was similar to that of Theodoric; and it is remarkable, that in an age not destitute of learning, two contemporary monarchs had never been instructed in the knowledge of the alphabet. But the genius of Justin was far inferior to that of the Gothic king: the experience of a soldier had not qualified him for the government of an empire; and, though personally brave, the consciousness of his own weakness was naturally attended with doubt, distrust, and political apprehension. But the official business of the state was diligently and faithfully transacted by the quæstor Proclus⁵; and the aged emperor adopted the talents and ambition of his nephew Justinian, an aspiring youth, whom his uncle had drawn from the rustic solitude of Dacia, and educated at Constantinople, as the heir of his private fortune and at length of the Eastern empire.

Adoption
and succeſ-
ſion of
Juſtinian,
A. D.
520—527.

Since the eunuch Amantius had been defrauded of his money, it became neceſſary to deprive him of his life. The taſk was eaſily accompliſhed by the charge of a real or fictitious conſpiracy; and the judges were informed, as an accumulation of guilt, that he was ſecretly addicted to the Manichæan heresy⁶. Amantius loſt his head; three of his companions, the firſt domeſtics of the palace, were puniſhed either with death or exile; and their unfortunate candidate for the purple was caſt into a deep dungeon, overwhelmed with ſtones, and ignominiouſly thrown, without burial,

into the sea. The ruin of Vitalian was a work of more difficulty and danger. That Gothic chief had rendered himself popular by the civil war which he boldly waged against Anastasius for the defence of the orthodox faith, and after the conclusion of an advantageous treaty, he still remained in the neighbourhood of Constantinople at the head of a formidable and victorious army of Barbarians. By the frail security of oaths, he was tempted to relinquish this advantageous situation, and to trust his person within the walls of a city, whose inhabitants, particularly the *blue* faction, were artfully incensed against him by the remembrance even of his pious hostilities. The emperor and his nephew embraced him as the faithful and worthy champion of the church and state; and gratefully adorned their favourite with the titles of consul and general; but in the seventh month of his consulship, Vitalian was stabbed with seventeen wounds at the royal banquet⁷; and Justinian, who inherited the spoil, was accused as the assassin of a spiritual brother, to whom he had recently pledged his faith in the participation of the Christian mysteries⁸. After the fall of his rival, he was promoted, without any claim of military service, to the office of master-general of the Eastern armies, whom it was his duty to lead into the field against the public enemy. But, in the pursuit of fame, Justinian might have lost his present dominion over the age and weakness of his uncle; and, instead of acquiring by Scythian or Persian trophies the applause of his

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countrymen⁹, the prudent warrior solicited their favour in the churches, the circus, and the senate, of Constantinople. The Catholics were attached to the nephew of Justin, who, between the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies, trod the narrow path of inflexible and intolerant orthodoxy¹⁰. In the first days of the new reign, he prompted and gratified the popular enthusiasm against the memory of the deceased emperor. After a schism of thirty-four years, he reconciled the proud and angry spirit of the Roman pontiff, and spread among the Latins a favourable report of his pious respect for the apostolic see. The thrones of the East were filled with Catholic bishops devoted to his interest, the clergy and the monks were gained by his liberality, and the people were taught to pray for their future sovereign, the hope and pillar of the true religion. The magnificence of Justinian was displayed in the superior pomp of his public spectacles, an object not less sacred and important in the eyes of the multitude, than the creed of Nice or Chalcedon: the expence of his consulship was esteemed at two hundred and eighty-eight thousand pieces of gold; twenty lions, and thirty leopards, were produced at the same time in the amphitheatre, and a numerous train of horses, with their rich trappings, was bestowed as an extraordinary gift on the victorious charioteers of the circus. While he indulged the people of Constantinople, and received the addresses of foreign kings, the nephew of Justin assiduously cultivated

cultivated the friendship of the senate. That venerable name seemed to qualify its members to declare the sense of the nation, and to regulate the succession of the Imperial throne: the feeble Anastasius had permitted the vigour of government to degenerate into the form or substance of an aristocracy; and the military officers who had obtained the senatorial rank, were followed by their domestic guards, a band of veterans, whose arms or acclamations might fix in a tumultuous moment the diadem of the East. The treasures of the state were lavished to procure the voices of the senators, and their unanimous wish, that he would be pleased to adopt Justinian for his colleague, was communicated to the emperor. But this request, which too clearly admonished him of his approaching end, was unwelcome to the jealous temper of an aged monarch, desirous to retain the power which he was incapable of exercising; and Justin, holding his purple with both his hands, advised them to prefer, since an election was so profitable, some older candidate. Notwithstanding this reproach, the senate proceeded to decorate Justinian with the royal epithet of *nobilissimus*; and their decree was ratified by the affection or the fears of his uncle. After some time the languor of mind and body, to which he was reduced by an incurable wound in his thigh, indispensably required the aid of a guardian. He summoned the patriarch and senators; and in their presence solemnly placed the diadem on the head of his

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nephew, who was conducted from the palace to the circus, and saluted by the loud and joyful applause of the people. The life of Justin was prolonged about four months, but from the instant of this ceremony, he was considered as dead to the empire, which acknowledged Justinian, in the forty-fifth year of his age, for the lawful sovereign of the East ¹¹.

The reign of
Justinian,
A. D. 527,
April 1—
A. D. 565,
Nov. 14.

Character
and histories
of Procopius.

From his elevation to his death, Justinian governed the Roman empire thirty-eight years, seven months, and thirteen days. The events of his reign, which excite our curious attention by their number, variety, and importance, are diligently related by the secretary of Belisarius a rhetorician, whom eloquence had promoted to the rank of senator and præfect of Constantinople. According to the vicissitudes of courage or servitude, of favour or disgrace, Procopius ¹² successively composed the *history*, the *panegyric*, and the *satire* of his own times. The eight books of the Persian, Vandalic, and Gothic wars ¹³, which are continued in the five books of Agathias, deserve our esteem as a laborious and successful imitation of the Attic, or at least of the Asiatic writers of ancient Greece. His facts are collected from the personal experience and free conversation of a soldier, a statesman, and a traveller; his style continually aspires, and often attains, to the merit of strength and elegance; his reflections, more especially in the speeches, which he too frequently inserts, contain a rich fund of political knowledge; and the historian,

excited by the generous ambition of pleasing and instructing posterity, appears to disdain the prejudices of the people, and the flattery of courts. The writings of Procopius¹⁴ were read and applauded by his contemporaries¹⁵; but, although he respectfully laid them at the foot of the throne, the pride of Justinian must have been wounded by the praise of an hero, who perpetually eclipses the glory of his inactive sovereign. The conscious dignity of independence was subdued by the hopes and fears of a slave; and the secretary of Belisarius laboured for pardon and reward in the six books of the imperial *edifices*. He had dextrously chosen a subject of apparent splendour, in which he could loudly celebrate the genius, the magnificence, and the piety of a prince, who, both as a conqueror and legislator, had surpassed the puerile virtues of Themistocles and Cyrus¹⁶. Disappointment might urge the flatterer to secret revenge; and the first glance of favour might again tempt him to suspend and suppress a libel¹⁷, in which the Roman Cyrus is degraded into an odious and contemptible tyrant, in which both the emperor and his consort Theodora are seriously represented as two dæmons, who had assumed an human form for the destruction of mankind¹⁸. Such base inconsistency must doubtless fully the reputation, and detract from the credit, of Procopius: yet, after the venom of his malignity has been suffered to exhale, the residue of the *anecdotes*, even the most disgraceful facts, some of which had been tenderly hinted

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Division of
the reign of
Justinian.

in his public history, are established by their internal evidence, or the authentic monuments of the times ¹⁹. From these various materials, I shall now proceed to describe the reign of Justinian, which will deserve and occupy an ample space. The present chapter will explain the elevation and character of Theodora, the factions of the circus, and the peaceful administration of the sovereign of the East. In the three succeeding chapters, I shall relate the wars of Justinian which achieved the conquest of Africa and Italy; and I shall follow the victories of Belisarius and Narses, without disguising the vanity of their triumphs, or the hostile virtue of the Persian and Gothic heroes. The series of this volume will embrace the jurisprudence and theology of the emperor; the controversies and sects which still divide the oriental church; the reformation of the Roman law, which is obeyed or respected by the nations of modern Europe.

Birth and
vices of the
empress The-
odora.

I. In the exercise of supreme power, the first act of Justinian was to divide it with the woman whom he loved, the famous Theodora ²⁰, whose strange elevation cannot be applauded as the triumph of female virtue. Under the reign of Anastasius, the care of the wild beasts maintained by the green faction at Constantinople, was entrusted to Acacius a native of the isle of Cyprus, who, from his employment, was surnamed the master of the bears. This honourable office was given after his death to another candidate, notwithstanding the diligence of his widow, who had already provided

a husband and a successor. Acacius had left three daughters, Comito²¹, THEODORA, and Anastasia, the eldest of whom did not then exceed the age of seven years. On a solemn festival, these helpless orphans were sent by their distressed and indignant mother, in the garb of suppliants, into the midst of the theatre: the green faction received them with contempt, the blues with compassion; and this difference, which sunk deep into the mind of Theodora, was felt long afterwards in the administration of the empire. As they improved in age and beauty, the three sisters were successively devoted to the public and private pleasures of the Byzantine people; and Theodora, after following Comito on the stage, in the dress of a slave, with a stool on her head, was at length permitted to exercise her independent talents. She neither danced, nor sung, nor played on the flute; her skill was confined to the pantomime arts; she excelled in buffoon characters, and as often as the comedian swelled her cheeks, and complained with a ridiculous tone and gesture of the blows that were inflicted, the whole theatre of Constantinople resounded with laughter and applause. The beauty of Theodora²² was the subject of more flattering praise, and the source of more exquisite delight. Her features were delicate and regular; her complexion, though somewhat pale, was tinged with a natural colour; every sensation was instantly expressed by the vivacity of her eyes; her easy motions displayed the graces of a small but ele-

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gant figure; and either love or adulation might proclaim, that painting and poetry were incapable of delineating the matchless excellence of her form. But this form was degraded by the facility with which it was exposed to the public eye, and prostituted to licentious desire. Her venal charms were abandoned to a promiscuous crowd of citizens and strangers, of every rank, and of every profession: the fortunate lover who had been promised a night of enjoyment, was often driven from her bed by a stronger or more wealthy favourite; and when she passed through the streets, her presence was avoided by all who wished to escape either the scandal or the temptation. The satirical historian has not blushed ²³ to describe the naked scenes which Theodora was not ashamed to exhibit in the theatre ²⁴. After exhausting the arts of sensual pleasure ²⁵, she most ungratefully murmured against the parsimony of Nature ²⁶; but her murmurs, her pleasures, and her arts, must be veiled in the obscurity of a learned language. After reigning for some time, the delight and contempt of the capital, she condescended to accompany Ecebolus, a native of Tyre, who had obtained the government of the African Pentapolis. But this union was frail and transient; Ecebolus soon rejected an expensive or faithless concubine; she was reduced at Alexandria to extreme distress; and in her laborious return to Constantinople, every city of the East admired and enjoyed the fair Cyprian, whose merit appeared to justify her descent from the peculiar island of

Venus. The vague commerce of Theodora, and the most detestable precautions, preserved her from the danger which she feared; yet once, and once only, she became a mother. The infant was saved and educated in Arabia, by his father, who imparted to him on his death-bed, that he was the son of an empress. Filled with ambitious hopes, the unsuspecting youth immediately hastened to the palace of Constantinople, and was admitted to the presence of his mother. As he was never more seen, even after the decease of Theodora, she deserves the foul imputation of extinguishing with his life a secret so offensive to her Imperial virtue.

In the most abject state of her fortune and reputation, some vision, either of sleep or of fancy, had whispered to Theodora the pleasing assurance that she was destined to become the spouse of a potent monarch. Conscious of her approaching greatness, she returned from Paphlagonia to Constantinople; assumed, like a skilful actress, a more decent character; relieved her poverty by the laudable industry of spinning wool; and affected a life of chastity and solitude in a small house, which she afterwards changed into a magnificent temple²⁷. Her beauty, assisted by art or accident, soon attracted, captivated, and fixed, the patrician Justinian, who already reigned with absolute sway under the name of his uncle. Perhaps she contrived to enhance the value of a gift which she had so often lavished on the meanest of mankind: perhaps she inflamed, at first by

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Her marriage
with Justi-
nian.

C H A P. XL. modest delays, and at last by sensual allurements, the desires of a lover, who from nature or devotion was addicted to long vigils and abstemious diet. When his first transports had subsided, she still maintained the same ascendant over his mind, by the more solid merit of temper and understanding. Justinian delighted to ennoble and enrich the object of his affection; the treasures of the East were poured at her feet, and the nephew of Justin was determined, perhaps by religious scruples, to bestow on his concubine the sacred and legal character of a wife. But the laws of Rome expressly prohibited the marriage of a senator with any female, who had been dishonoured by a servile origin or theatrical profession; the empress Lupicina, or Euphemia, a Barbarian of rustic manners, but of irreproachable virtue, refused to accept a prostitute for her niece; and even Vigilantia the superstitious mother of Justinian, though she acknowledged the wit and beauty of Theodora, was seriously apprehensive, lest the levity and arrogance of that artful paramour might corrupt the piety and happiness of her son. These obstacles were removed by the inflexible constancy of Justinian. He patiently expected the death of the empress; he despised the tears of his mother, who soon sunk under the weight of her affliction; and a law was promulgated in the name of the emperor Justin, which abolished the rigid jurisprudence of antiquity. A glorious repentance (the words of the edict) was left open for the unhappy females who had prostituted their persons on the theatre,

and they were permitted to contract a legal union with the most illustrious of the Romans²³. This indulgence was speedily followed by the solemn nuptials of Justinian and Theodora; her dignity was gradually exalted with that of her lover; and, as soon as Justin had invested his nephew with the purple, the patriarch of Constantinople placed the diadem on the heads of the emperor and empress of the East. But the usual honours which the severity of Roman manners had allowed to the wives of princes, could not satisfy either the ambition of Theodora or the fondness of Justinian. He seated her on the throne as an equal and independent colleague in the sovereignty of the empire, and an oath of allegiance was imposed on the governors of the provinces in the joint names of Justinian and Theodora²⁴. The Eastern world fell prostrate before the genius and fortune of the daughter of Acacius. The prostitute who, in the presence of innumerable spectators, had polluted the theatre of Constantinople, was adored as a queen in the same city, by grave magistrates, orthodox bishops, victorious generals, and captive monarchs²⁵.

Those who believe that the female mind is totally depraved by the loss of chastity, will eagerly listen to all the invectives of private envy or popular resentment, which have dissembled the virtues of Theodora, exaggerated her vices, and condemned with rigour the venal or voluntary sins of the youthful harlot. From a motive of shame or contempt, she often declined the servile

C H A P. XL. homage of the multitude, escaped from the odious light of the capital, and passed the greatest part of the year in the palaces and gardens which were pleasantly seated on the sea-coast of the Propontis and the Bosphorus. Her private hours were devoted to the prudent as well as grateful care of her beauty, the luxury of the bath and table, and the long slumber of the evening and the morning. Her secret apartments were occupied by the favourite women and eunuchs, whose interests and passions she indulged at the expence of justice; the most illustrious personages of the state were crowded into a dark and sultry antichamber, and when at last, after tedious attendance, they were admitted to kiss the feet of Theodora, they experienced, as her humour might suggest, the silent arrogance of an empress, or the capricious levity of a comedian. Her rapacious avarice to accumulate an immense treasure, may be excused by the apprehension of her husband's death, which could leave no alternative between ruin and the throne; and fear as well as ambition might exasperate Theodora against two generals, who, during a malady of the emperor, had rashly declared that they were not disposed to acquiesce in the choice of the capital. But the reproach of cruelty, so repugnant even to her softer vices, has left an indelible stain on the memory of Theodora. Her numerous spies observed, and zealously reported, every action, or word, or look, injurious to their royal mistress. Whomsoever they accused were cast into her peculiar prisons³¹, inaccessible to the enquiries of

justice; and it was rumoured, that the torture of the rack, or scourge, had been inflicted in the presence of a female tyrant, insensible to the voice of prayer or of pity ³². Some of these unhappy victims perished in deep unwholesome dungeons, while others were permitted, after the loss of their limbs, their reason, or their fortune, to appear in the world the living monuments of her vengeance, which was commonly extended to the children of those whom she had suspected or injured. The senator or bishop, whose death or exile Theodora had pronounced, was delivered to a trusty messenger, and his diligence was quickened by a menace from her own mouth. "If you fail in the execution of my commands, I swear by him who liveth for ever, that your skin shall be flay'd from your body ³³."

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If the creed of Theodora had not been tainted with heresy, her exemplary devotion might have atoned, in the opinion of her contemporaries, for pride, avarice, and cruelty. But, if she employed her influence to assuage the intolerant fury of the emperor, the present age will allow some merit to her religion, and much indulgence to her speculative errors ³⁴. The name of Theodora was introduced, with equal honour, in all the pious and charitable foundations of Justinian; and the most benevolent institution of his reign may be ascribed to the sympathy of the empress for her less fortunate sisters, who had been seduced or compelled to embrace the trade of prostitution. A palace, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, was converted into a stately and spacious monas-

Her virtues,

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tery, and a liberal maintenance was assigned to five hundred women, who had been collected from the streets and brothels of Constantinople. In this safe and holy retreat, they were devoted to perpetual confinement; and the despair of some, who threw themselves headlong into the sea, was lost in the gratitude of the penitents, who had been delivered from sin and misery by their generous benefactress³⁵. The prudence of Theodora is celebrated by Justinian himself; and his laws are attributed to the sage counsels of his most reverend wife, whom he had received as the gift of the Deity³⁶. Her courage was displayed amidst the tumult of the people and the terrors of the court. Her chastity, from the moment of her union with Justinian, is founded on the silence of her implacable enemies; and, although the daughter of Acacius might be satiated with love, yet some applause is due to the firmness of a mind which could sacrifice pleasure and habit to the stronger sense either of duty or interest. The wishes and prayers of Theodora could never obtain the blessing of a lawful son, and she buried an infant daughter, the sole offspring of her marriage³⁷. Notwithstanding this disappointment, her dominion was permanent and absolute; she preserved, by art or merit, the affections of Justinian; and their seeming dissensions were always fatal to the courtiers who believed them to be sincere. Perhaps her health had been impaired by the licentiousness of her youth; but it was always delicate, and she was directed by her physicians to use the

Pythian warm baths. In this journey, the empress was followed by the prætorian præfect, the great treasurer, several counts and patricians, and a splendid train of four thousand attendants: the highways were repaired at her approach; a palace was erected for her reception; and as she passed through Bithynia, she distributed liberal alms, to the churches, the monasteries, and the hospitals, that they might implore heaven for the restoration of her health³⁸. At length, in the twenty-fourth year of her marriage, and the twenty-second of her reign, she was consumed by a cancer³⁹; and the irreparable loss was deplored by her husband, who, in the room of a theatrical prostitute, might have selected the purest and most noble virgin of the East⁴⁰.

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and death,
A. D. 548,
June 11.

II. A material difference may be observed in the games of antiquity: the most eminent of the Greeks were actors, the Romans were merely spectators. The Olympic stadium was open to wealth, merit, and ambition; and if the candidates could depend on their personal skill and activity, they might pursue the footsteps of Diomedes and Menelaus, and conduct their own horses in the rapid career⁴¹. Ten, twenty, forty chariots, were allowed to start at the same instant; a crown of leaves was the reward of the victor; and his fame, with that of his family and country, was chaunted in lyric strains more durable than monuments of brass and marble. But a senator, or even a citizen, conscious of his dignity, would have blushed to expose his person

The factions
of the circus,

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G H A P. or his horses in the circus of Rome. The games
 XL, were exhibited at the expence of the republic,
 the magistrates, or the emperors: but the reins
 were abandoned to servile hands, and if the pro-
 fits of a favourite charioteer sometimes exceeded
 those of an advocate, they must be considered as
 the effects of popular extravagance, and the high
 wages of a disgraceful profession. The race, in
 its first institution, was a simple contest of two
 chariots, whose drivers were distinguished by *white*
 and *red* liveries; two additional colours, a light
green, and a cærulean *blue*, were afterwards in-
 troduced; and, as the races were repeated twenty-
 five times, one hundred chariots contributed in
 the same day to the pomp of the circus. The
 four *factions* soon acquired a legal establishment,
 and a mysterious origin, and their fanciful colours
 were derived from the various appearances of na-
 ture in the four seasons of the year; the red dog-
 star of summer, the snows of winter, the deep
 shades of autumn, and the cheerful verdure of
 the spring⁴². Another interpretation preferred the
 elements to the seasons, and the struggle of the green
 and blue was supposed to represent the conflict of
 the earth and sea. Their respective victories announ-
 ced either a plentiful harvest or a prosperous navi-
 gation, and the hostility of the husbandmen and
 mariners was somewhat less absurd than the blind
 ardour of the Roman people, who devoted their
 lives and fortunes to the colour which they had
 espoused. Such folly was disdained and indulged
 by the wisest princes; but the names of Caligula,

Nero, Vitellius, Verus, Commodus, Caracalla, and Elagabalus, were enrolled in the blue or green factions of the circus; they frequented their stables, applauded their favourites, chastised their antagonists, and deserved the esteem of the populace, by the natural or affected imitation of their manners. The bloody and tumultuous contest continued to disturb the public festivity, till the last age of the spectacles of Rome; and Theodoric, from a motive of justice or affection, interposed his authority to protect the greens against the violence of a consul and a patrician, who were passionately addicted to the blue faction of the circus⁴³.

Constantinople adopted the follies, though not the virtues, of ancient Rome; and the same factions which had agitated the circus, raged with redoubled-fury in the hippodrome. Under the reign of Anastasius, this popular frenzy was inflamed by religious zeal; and the greens, who had treacherously concealed stones and daggers under baskets of fruit, massacred at a solemn festival, three thousand of their blue adversaries⁴⁴. From the capital, this pestilence was diffused into the provinces and cities of the east, and the sportive distinction of two colours produced two strong and irreconcilable factions, which shook the foundations of a feeble government⁴⁵. The popular dissensions, founded on the most serious interest, or holy pretence, have scarcely equalled the obstinacy of this wanton discord, which invaded the peace of families, divided friends and brothers, and tempted the female sex, though seldom seen

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They distract
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Justinian fa-
vours the
blues.

in the circus, to espouse the inclinations of their lovers, or to contradict the wishes of their husbands. Every law, either human or divine, was trampled under foot, and as long as the party was successful, its deluded followers appeared careless of private distress or public calamity. The licence, without the freedom of democracy, was revived at Antioch, and Constantinople, and the support of a faction became necessary to every candidate for civil or ecclesiastical honours. A secret attachment to the family or sect of Anastasius, was imputed to the greens; the blues were zealously devoted to the cause of orthodoxy and Justinian⁴⁶, and their grateful patron, protected, above five years, the disorders of a faction, whose seasonable tumults overawed the palace, the senate, and the capitals of the East. Insolent with royal favour, the blues affected to strike terror by a peculiar and Barbaric dress, the long hair of the Huns, their close sleeves and ample garments, a lofty step, and a sonorous voice. In the day they concealed their two-edged ponyards, but in the night they boldly assembled in arms, and in numerous bands, prepared for every act of violence and rapine. Their adversaries of the green faction, or even inoffensive citizens, were stripped and often murdered by these nocturnal robbers, and it became dangerous to wear any gold buttons or girdles, or to appear at a late hour in the streets of a peaceful capital. A daring spirit, rising with impunity, proceeded to violate the safeguard of private houses; and fire was employed to facilitate

tate the attack, or to conceal the crimes of these factious rioters. No place was safe or sacred from their depredations; to gratify either avarice or revenge, they profusely spilt the blood of the innocent; churches and altars were polluted by atrocious murders, and it was the boast of the assassins, that their dexterity could always inflict a mortal wound with a single stroke of their dagger. The dissolute youth of Constantinople adopted the blue livery of disorder; the laws were silent, and the bonds of society were relaxed; creditors were compelled to resign their obligations; judges to reverse their sentence; masters to enfranchise their slaves; fathers to supply the extravagance of their children; noble matrons were prostituted to the lust of their servants; beautiful boys were torn from the arms of their parents; and wives, unless they preferred a voluntary death, were ravished in the presence of their husbands⁴⁷. The despair of the greens, who were persecuted by their enemies, and deserted by the magistrate, assumed the privilege of defence, perhaps of retaliation: but those who survived the combat, were dragged to execution, and the unhappy fugitives escaping to woods and caverns, preyed without mercy on the society from whence they were expelled. Those ministers of justice who had courage to punish the crimes, and to brave the resentment of the blues, became the victims of their indiscreet zeal; a præfect of Constantinople fled for refuge to the holy sepulchre, a count of the East was ignominiously

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whipped, and a governor of Cilicia was hanged by the order of Theodora, on the tomb of two assassins whom he had condemned for the murder of his groom, and the daring attack upon his own life ⁴⁸. An aspiring candidate may be tempted to build his greatness on the public confusion, but it is the interest as well as duty of a sovereign to maintain the authority of the laws. The first edict of Justinian, which was often repeated, and sometimes executed, announced his firm resolution to support the innocent, and to chastise the guilty of every denomination and *colour*. Yet the balance of justice was still inclined in favour of the blue faction, by the secret affection, the habits, and the fears of the emperor; his equity, after an apparent struggle, submitted, without reluctance, to the implacable passions of Theodora, and the empress never forgot or forgave the injuries of the comedian. At the accession of the younger Justin, the proclamation of equal and rigorous justice indirectly condemned the partiality of the former reign. “Ye blues, Justinian is no more! ye greens, he is still alive ⁴⁹!”

Sedition of
Constanti-
nople, sur-
named *Nika*,
A. D. 532;
January.

A sedition, which almost laid Constantinople in ashes, was excited by the mutual hatred and momentary reconciliation of the two factions. In the fifth year of his reign, Justinian celebrated the festival of the ides of January: the games were incessantly disturbed by the clamorous discontent of the greens; till the twenty-second race, the emperor maintained his silent gravity; at length, yielding to his impatience, he condescended to

hold, in abrupt sentences, and by the voice of a cryer, the most singular dialogue^o that ever passed between a prince and his subjects. Their first complaints were respectful and modest; they accused the subordinate ministers of oppression, and proclaimed their wishes for the long life and victory of the emperor. "Be patient and attentive, ye insolent railers," exclaimed Justinian; "be mute, ye Jews, Samaritans, and Manichæans." The greens still attempted to awaken his compassion. "We are poor, we are innocent, we are injured, we dare not pass through the streets: a general persecution is exercised against our name and colour. Let us die, O emperor, but let us die by your command, and for your service!" But the repetition of partial and passionate invectives degraded, in their eyes, the majesty of the purple; they renounced allegiance to the prince who refused justice to his people; lamented that the father of Justinian had been born; and branded his son with the opprobrious names of an homicide, an afs, and a perjured tyrant. "Do you despise your lives?" cried the indignant monarch: the blues rose with fury from their seats; their hostile clamours thundered in the hippodrome; and their adversaries, deserting the unequal contest, spread terror and despair through the streets of Constantinople. At this dangerous moment, seven notorious assassins of both factions, who had been condemned by the præfect, were carried round the city, and afterwards transf-

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ported to the place of execution in the suburb of Pera. Four were immediately beheaded; a fifth was hanged: but when the same punishment was inflicted on the remaining two, the rope broke, they fell alive to the ground, the populace applauded their escape, and the monks of St. Conon, issuing from the neighbouring convent, conveyed them in a boat to the sanctuary of the church⁵¹. As one of these criminals was of the blue, and the other of the green livery, the two factions were equally provoked by the cruelty of their oppressor, or the ingratitude of their patron; and a short truce was concluded till they had delivered their prisoners and satisfied their revenge. The palace of the præfect, who withstood the seditious torrent, was instantly burnt, his officers and guards were massacred, the prisons were forced open, and freedom was restored to those who could only use it for the public destruction. A military force, which had been dispatched to the aid of the civil magistrate, was fiercely encountered by an armed multitude, whose numbers and boldness continually encreased; and the Heruli, the wildest Barbarians in the service of the empire, overturned the priests and their relics, which, from a pious motive, had been rashly interposed to separate the bloody conflict. The tumult was exasperated by this sacrilege, the people fought with enthusiasm in the cause of God; the women, from the roofs and windows, showered stones on the heads of the soldiers,

who darted firebrands against the houses; and the various flames, which had been kindled by the hands of citizens and strangers, spread without controul over the face of the city. The conflagration involved the cathedral of St. Sophia, the baths of Zeuxippus, a part of the palace, from the first entrance to the altar of Mars, and the long portico from the palace to the forum of Constantine; a large hospital, with the sick patients, was consumed; many churches and stately edifices were destroyed, and an immense treasure of gold and silver was either melted or lost. From such scenes of horror and distress, the wise and wealthy citizens escaped over the Bosphorus to the Asiatic side; and during five days Constantinople was abandoned to the factions, whose watch-word, *NIKA*, *vanquish!* has given a name to this memorable sedition⁵².

As long as the factions were divided, the triumphant blues, and desponding greens, appeared to behold with the same indifference the disorders of the state. They agreed to censure the corrupt management of justice and the finance; and the two responsible ministers, the artful Tribonian, and the rapacious John of Capadocia, were loudly arraigned as the authors of the public misery. The peaceful murmurs of the people would have been disregarded: they were heard with respect when the city was in flames; the quæstor, and the præfect, were instantly removed, and their offices were filled by two senators of blameless integrity. After this popular

The distress
of Justinian.

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concession, Justinian proceeded to the hippodrome to confess his own errors, and to accept the repentance of his grateful subjects; but they distrusted his assurances, though solemnly pronounced in the presence of the holy gospels; and the emperor, alarmed by their distrust, retreated with precipitation to the strong fortrefs of the palace. The obstinacy of the tumult was now imputed to a secret and ambitious conspiracy; and a suspicion was entertained, that the insurgents, more especially the green faction, had been supplied with arms and money by Hypatius and Pompey, two patricians, who could neither forget with honour, nor remember with safety, that they were the nephews of the emperor Anastasius. Capriciously trusted, disgraced, and pardoned, by the jealous levity of the monarch, they had appeared as loyal servants before the throne; and, during five days of the tumult, they were detained as important hostages; till at length, the fears of Justinian prevailing over his prudence, he viewed the two brothers in the light of spies, perhaps of assassins, and sternly commanded them to depart from the palace. After a fruitless representation, that obedience might lead to involuntary treason, they retired to their houses, and in the morning of the sixth day Hypatius was surrounded and seized by the people, who, regardless of his virtuous resistance, and the tears of his wife, transported their favourite to the forum of Constantine, and instead of a diadem, placed a rich collar on his head. If the usurper, who afterwards pleaded

the merit of his delay, had complied with the advice of his senate, and urged the fury of the multitude, their first irresistible effort might have oppressed or expelled his trembling competitor. The Byzantine palace enjoyed a free communication with the sea; vessels lay ready at the garden stairs; and a secret resolution was already formed, to convey the emperor with his family and treasures to a safe retreat, at some distance from the capital.

Justinian was lost, if the prostitute whom he raised from the theatre had not renounced the timidity, as well as the virtues, of her sex. In the midst of a council, where Belisarius was present, Theodora alone displayed the spirit of an hero; and she alone, without apprehending his future hatred, could save the emperor from the imminent danger, and his unworthy fears. Firmness of Theodora.

“ If flight,” said the consort of Justinian, “ were
 “ the only means of safety, yet I should disdain
 “ to fly. Death is the condition of our birth;
 “ but they who have reigned should never survive
 “ the loss of dignity and dominion. I implore
 “ heaven, that I may never be seen, not
 “ a day, without my diadem and purple; that
 “ I may no longer behold the light, when I
 “ cease to be saluted with the name of queen.
 “ If you resolve, O Cæsar, to fly, you have
 “ treasures; behold the sea, you have ships; but
 “ tremble lest the desire of life should expose
 “ you to wretched exile and ignominious death.
 “ For my own part, I adhere to the maxim of

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The sedition
is suppressed.

“ antiquity, that the throne is a glorious sepulchre.” The firmness of a woman restored the courage to deliberate and act, and courage soon discovers the resources of the most desperate situation. It was an easy and a decisive measure to revive the animosity of the factions; the blues were astonished at their own guilt and folly, that a trifling injury should provoke them to conspire with their implacable enemies against a gracious and liberal benefactor; they again proclaimed the majesty of Justinian, and the greens, with their upstart emperor, were left alone in the hippodrome. The fidelity of the guards was doubtful; but the military force of Justinian consisted in three thousand veterans, who had been trained to valour and discipline in the Persian and Illyrian wars. Under the command of Belisarius and Mundus, they silently marched in two divisions from the palace, forced their obscure way through narrow passages, expiring flames, and falling edifices, and burst open at the same moment the two opposite gates of the hippodrome. In this narrow space, the disorderly and affrighted crowd was incapable of resisting on either side a firm and regular attack; the blues signalized the fury of their repentance; and it is computed, that above thirty thousand persons were slain in the merciless and promiscuous carnage of the day. Hypatius was dragged from his throne, and conducted with his brother Pompey to the feet of the emperor: they implored his clemency; but their crime was manifest, their

innocence uncertain, and Justinian had been too much terrified to forgive. The next morning the two nephews of Anastasius, with eighteen *illustrious* accomplices, of patrician or consular rank, were privately executed by the soldiers; their bodies were thrown into the sea, their palaces razed, and their fortunes confiscated. The hippodrome itself was condemned, during several years, to a mournful silence: with the restoration of the games, the same disorders revived; and the blue and green factions continued to afflict the reign of Justinian, and to disturb the tranquillity of the Eastern empire⁵³.

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III. That empire, after Rome was barbarous, still embraced the nations whom she had conquered beyond the Hadriatic, and as far as the frontiers of Æthiopia and Persia. Justinian reigned over sixty-four provinces, and nine hundred and thirty-five cities⁵⁴; his dominions were blessed by nature with the advantages of soil, situation, and climate: and the improvements of human art had been perpetually diffused along the coast of the Mediterranean and the banks of the Nile, from ancient Troy to the Egyptian Thebes. Abraham⁵⁵ had been relieved by the well-known plenty of Egypt; the same country, a small and populous tract, was still capable of exporting, each year, two hundred and sixty thousand quarters of wheat for the use of Constantinople⁵⁶; and the capital of Justinian was supplied with the manufactures of Sidon, fifteen centuries after they had been celebrated in the poems of Homer⁵⁷.

Agriculture
and manu-
factures of
the Eastern
empire.

The use of
the
Sidon
manufactures

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The annual powers of vegetation, instead of being exhausted by two thousand harvests, were renewed and invigorated by skilful husbandry, rich manure, and seasonable repose. The breed of domestic animals was infinitely multiplied. Plantations, buildings, and the instruments of labour and luxury, which are more durable than the term of human life, were accumulated by the care of successive generations. Tradition preserved, and experience simplified, the humble practice of the arts: society was enriched by the division of labour and the facility of exchange; and every Roman was lodged, clothed, and subsisted, by the industry of a thousand hands. The invention of the loom and distaff has been piously ascribed to the gods. In every age, a variety of animal and vegetable productions, hair, skins, wool, flax, cotton, and at length *silk*, have been skilfully manufactured to hide or adorn the human body; they were stained with an infusion of permanent colours; and the pencil was successfully employed to improve the labours of the loom. In the choice of those colours⁵⁸ which imitate the beauties of nature, the freedom of taste and fashion was indulged; but the deep purple⁵⁹ which the Phœnicians extracted from a shell-fish, was restrained to the sacred person and palace of the emperor; and the penalties of treason were denounced against the ambitious subjects, who dared to usurp the prerogative of the throne⁶⁰.

The use of
silk by the
Romans.

I need not explain that *silk*⁶¹ is originally spun from the bowels of a caterpillar, and that it

composes the golden tomb from whence a worm emerges in the form of a butterfly. Till the reign of Justinian, the silk-worms who feed on the leaves of the white mulberry-tree, were confined to China; those of the pine, the oak, and the ash, were common in the forests both of Asia and Europe; but as their education is more difficult, and their produce more uncertain, they were generally neglected, except in the little island of Ceos, near the coast of Attica. A thin gauze was procured from their webs, and this Cean manufacture, the invention of a woman, for female use, was long admired both in the East and at Rome. Whatever suspicions may be raised by the garments of the Medes and Assyrians, Virgil is the most ancient writer, who expressly mentions the soft wool which was combed from the trees of the Seres or Chinese⁶²; and this natural error, less marvellous than the truth, was slowly corrected by the knowledge of a valuable insect, the first artificer of the luxury of nations. That rare and elegant luxury was censured, in the reign of Tiberius, by the gravest of the Romans; and Pliny, in affected though forcible language, has condemned the thirst of gain, which explored the last confines of the earth, for the pernicious purpose of exposing to the public eye naked draperies and transparent matrons⁶³. A dress which shewed the turn of the limbs, and colour of the skin, might gratify vanity, or provoke desire; the silks which had been closely woven in China, were sometimes

C H A P. XL. unravelled by the Phœnician women, and the precious materials were multiplied by a looser texture, and the intermixture of linen threads⁶⁴. Two hundred years after the age of Pliny, the use of pure or even of mixed silks was confined to the female sex, till the opulent citizens of Rome and the provinces were insensibly familiarised with the example of Elagabalus, the first who, by this effeminate habit, had sullied the dignity of an emperor and a man. Aurelian complained, that a pound of silk was sold at Rome for twelve ounces of gold: but the supply encreased with the demand, and the price diminished with the supply. If accident or monopoly sometimes raised the value even above the standard of Aurelian, the manufacturers of Tyre and Berytus were sometimes compelled by the operation of the same causes to content themselves with a ninth part of that extravagant rate⁶⁵. A law was thought necessary to discriminate the dress of comedians from that of senators, and of the silk exported from its native country the far greater part was consumed by the subjects of Justinian. They were still more intimately acquainted with a shell-fish of the Mediterranean, surnamed the silk-worm of the sea: the fine wool or hair by which the mother-of-pearl affixes itself to the rock, is now manufactured for curiosity rather than use; and a robe obtained from the same singular materials, was the gift of the Roman emperor to the satraps of Armenia⁶⁶.

A valuable merchandize of small bulk is capable of defraying the expence of land carriage; and the caravans traversed the whole latitude of Asia in two hundred and forty-three days from the Chinese ocean to the sea-coast of Syria. Silk was immediately delivered to the Romans by the Persian merchants ⁶⁷, who frequented the fairs of Armenia and Nisibis: but this trade, which in the intervals of truce was oppressed by avarice and jealousy, was totally interrupted by the long wars of the rival monarchies. The great king might proudly number Sogdiana, and even *Serica*, among the provinces of his empire, but his real dominion was bounded by the Oxus; and his useful intercourse with the Sogdoites, beyond the river, depended on the pleasure of their conquerors, the white Huns, and the Turks, who successively reigned over that industrious people. Yet the most savage dominion has not extirpated the seeds of agriculture and commerce, in a region which is celebrated as one of the four gardens of Asia; the cities of Samarcand and Bochara are advantageously seated for the exchange of its various productions; and their merchants purchased from the Chinese ⁶⁸ the raw or manufactured silk which they transported into Persia for the use of the Roman empire. In the vain capital of China, the Sogdian caravans were entertained as the suppliant embassies of tributary kingdoms, and if they returned in safety, the bold adventure was rewarded with exorbitant gain. But the difficult and perilous march from

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Importation
from China
by land and
sea.

CHAP. XL. Samarcand to the first town of Shenfi, could not be performed in less than sixty, eighty, or one hundred days: as soon as they had passed the Jaxartes they entered the desert; and the wandering hords, unless they are restrained by armies and garrisons, have always considered the citizen and the traveller as the objects of lawful rapine. To escape the Tartar robbers, and the tyrants of Persia, the silk-caravans explored a more southern road; they traversed the mountains of Thibet, descended the streams of the Ganges or the Indus, and patiently expected, in the ports of Guzerat and Malabar, the annual fleets of the West⁶⁹. But the dangers of the desert were found less intolerable than toil, hunger, and the loss of time; the attempt was seldom renewed, and the only European who has passed that unfrequented way, applauds his own diligence, that, in nine months after his departure from Pekin, he reached the mouth of the Indus. The ocean, however, was open to the free communication of mankind. From the great river to the tropic of Cancer, the provinces of China were subdued and civilized by the emperors of the North; they were filled about the time of the Christian æra with cities and men, mulberry-trees and their precious inhabitants; and if the Chinese, with the knowledge of the compass, had possessed the genius of the Greeks or Phœnicians, they might have spread their discoveries over the southern hemisphere. I am not qualified to examine, and I am not disposed to believe, their distant

voyages to the Persian gulf or the Cape of Good Hope: but their ancestors might equal the labours and success of the present race, and the sphere of their navigation might extend from the isles of Japan to the streights of Malacca, the pillars, if we may apply that name, of an Oriental Hercules⁷⁰. Without losing sight of land they might sail along the coast to the extreme promontory of Achin, which is annually visited by ten or twelve ships laden with the productions, the manufactures, and even the artificers, of China; the island of Sumatra and the opposite peninsula, are faintly delineated⁷¹ as the regions of gold and silver; and the trading cities named in the geography of Ptolemy, may indicate, that this wealth was not solely derived from the mines. The direct interval between Sumatra and Ceylon is about three hundred leagues; the Chinese and Indian navigators were conducted by the flight of birds and periodical winds, and the ocean might be securely traversed in square-built ships, which, instead of iron, were sewed together with the strong thread of the cocoa-nut. Ceylon, Serendib, or Taprobana, was divided between two hostile princes; one of whom possessed the mountains, the elephants, and the luminous carbuncle, and the other enjoyed the more solid riches of domestic industry, foreign trade, and the capacious harbour of Trinquemale, which received and dismissed the fleets of the East and West. In this hospitable isle, at an equal distance (as it was computed) from their respective

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C H A P. countries, the silk merchants of China, who had
 XL. collected in their voyages aloes, cloves, nutmeg,
 and fantal wood, maintained a free and beneficial
 commerce with the inhabitants of the Persian gulf.
 The subjects of the great king exalted, without
 a rival, his power and magnificence; and the
 Roman, who confounded their vanity by com-
 paring his paltry coin with a gold medal of the
 emperor Anastasius, had sailed to Ceylon, in an
 Æthiopian ship, as a simple passenger ⁷².

Introduction
 of silk-worms
 into Greece.

As silk became of indispensable use, the em-
 peror Justinian saw, with concern, that the
 Persians had occupied by land and sea the mono-
 poly of this important supply, and that the wealth
 of his subjects was continually drained by a nation
 of enemies and idolaters. An active government
 would have restored the trade of Egypt and the
 navigation of the Red Sea, which had decayed
 with the prosperity of the empire; and the Roman
 vessels might have sailed, for the purchase of
 silk, to the ports of Ceylon, of Malacca, or
 even of China. Justinian embraced a more
 humble expedient, and solicited the aid of his
 Christian allies, the Æthiopians of Abyssinia,
 who had recently acquired the arts of navigation,
 the spirit of trade, and the sea-port of Adulis ⁷³,
 still decorated with the trophies of a Grecian
 conqueror. Along the African coast, they pe-
 netrated to the equator in search of gold, emer-
 als, and aromatics; but they wisely declined an
 unequal competition, in which they must be
 always prevented by the vicinity of the Persians
 to

to the markets of India; and the emperor submitted to the disappointment; till his wishes were gratified by an unexpected event. The gospel had been preached to the Indians: a bishop already governed the Christians of St. Thomas on the pepper-coast of Malabar; a church was planted in Ceylon, and the missionaries pursued the footsteps of commerce to the extremities of Asia⁷⁴. Two Persian monks had long resided in China, perhaps in the royal city of Nankin, the seat of a monarch addicted to foreign superstitions, and who actually received an embassy from the isle of Ceylon. Amidst their pious occupations, they viewed with a curious eye the common dress of the Chinese, the manufactures of silk, and the myriads of silk-worms, whose education (either on trees or in houses) had once been considered as the labour of queens⁷⁵. They soon discovered that it was impracticable to transport the short-lived insect, but that in the eggs a numerous progeny might be preserved and multiplied in a distant climate. Religion or interest had more power over the Persian monks than the love of their country: after a long journey, they arrived at Constantinople, imparted their project to the emperor, and were liberally encouraged by the gifts and promises of Justinian. To the historians of that prince, a campaign at the foot of mount Caucasus has seemed more deserving of a minute relation than the labours of these missionaries of commerce, who again entered China, deceived a jealous people by concealing the eggs

CHAP. of the filk-worm in a hollow cane, and returned
 XL. in triumph with the spoils of the East. Under
 their direction, the eggs were hatched at the
 proper season by the artificial heat of dung; the
 worms were fed with mulberry leaves; they
 lived and laboured in a foreign climate; a suffi-
 cient number of butterflies was saved to propagate
 the race, and trees were planted to supply the
 nourishment of the rising generations. Experience
 and reflection corrected the errors of a new
 attempt, and the Sogdoite ambassadors acknow-
 ledged, in the succeeding reign, that the Romans
 were not inferior to the natives of China in the
 education of the insects, and the manufactures of
 filk⁷⁶, in which both China and Constantinople
 have been surpassed by the industry of modern
 Europe. I am not insensible of the benefits of
 elegant luxury; yet I reflect with some pain,
 that if the importers of filk had introduced the
 art of printing, already practised by the Chinese,
 the comedies of Menander and the entire decads
 of Livy would have been perpetuated in the edi-
 tions of the sixth century. A larger view of the
 globe might at least have promoted the improve-
 ment of speculative science, but the Christian
 geography was forcibly extracted from texts of
 scripture, and the study of nature was the surest
 symptom of an unbelieving mind. The orthodox
 faith confined the habitable world to *one* tem-
 perate zone, and represented the earth as an
 oblong surface, four hundred days journey in
 length, two hundred in breadth, encompassed by

the ocean, and covered by the solid crystal of the firmament ⁷⁷. C H A P. XL.

IV. The subjects of Justinian were dissatisfied with the times, and with the government. State of the revenue. Europe was over-run by the Barbarians, and Asia by the monks: the poverty of the West discouraged the trade and manufactures of the East; the produce of labour was consumed by the unprofitable servants of the church, the state, and the army; and a rapid decrease was felt in the fixed and circulating capitals which constitute the national wealth. The public distress had been alleviated by the œconomy of Anastasius, and that prudent emperor accumulated an immense treasure while he delivered his people from the most odious or oppressive taxes. Their gratitude universally applauded the abolition of the *gold of affliction*, a personal tribute on the industry of the poor ⁷⁸, but more intolerable, as it should seem, in the form than in the substance, since the flourishing city of Edessa paid only one hundred and forty pounds of gold, which was collected in four years from ten thousand artificers ⁷⁹. Yet such was the parsimony which supported this liberal disposition, that in a reign of twenty-seven years, Anastasius saved, from his annual revenue, the enormous sum of thirteen millions sterling, or three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of gold ⁸⁰. His example was neglected, and his treasure was abused, by the nephew of Justin. The riches of Justinian were speedily exhausted by alms and buildings, by ambitious wars, and

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XL.

Avarice and
profusion of
Justinian.

ignominious treaties. His revenues were found inadequate to his expences. Every art was tried to extort from the people the gold and silver which he scattered with a lavish hand from Persia to France ⁸¹: his reign was marked by the vicissitudes, or rather by the combat, of rapaciousness and avarice, of splendour and poverty; he lived with the reputation of hidden treasures ⁸², and bequeathed to his successor the payment of his debts ⁸³. Such a character has been justly accused by the voice of the people and of posterity: but public discontent is credulous; private malice is bold; and a lover of truth will peruse with a suspicious eye the instructive anecdotes of Procopius. The secret historian represents only the vices of Justinian, and those vices are darkened by his malevolent pencil. Ambiguous actions are imputed to the worst motives: error is confounded with guilt, accident with design, and laws with abuses: the partial injustice of a moment is dextrously applied as the general maxim of a reign of thirty-two years: the emperor alone is made responsible for the faults of his officers, the disorders of the times, and the corruption of his subjects; and even the calamities of nature, plagues, earthquakes, and inundations, are imputed to the prince of the dæmons, who had mischievously assumed the form of Justinian ⁸⁴.

Pernicious
savings.

After this precaution, I shall briefly relate the anecdotes of avarice and rapine, under the following heads: I. Justinian was so profuse that he could not be liberal. The civil and military offi-

cers, when they were admitted into the service of the palace, obtained an humble rank and a moderate stipend; they ascended by seniority to a station of affluence and repose; the annual pensions, of which the most honourable class was abolished by Justinian, amounted to four hundred thousand pounds; and this domestic œconomy was deplored by the venal or indigent courtiers as the last outrage on the majesty of the empire. The posts, the salaries of physicians, and the nocturnal illuminations, were objects of more general concern; and the cities might justly complain, that he usurped the municipal revenues which had been appropriated to these useful institutions. Even the foldiers were injured; and such was the decay of military spirit, that they were injured with impunity. The emperor refused, at the return of each fifth year, the customary donative of five pieces of gold, reduced his veterans to beg their bread, and suffered unpaid armies to melt away in the wars of Italy and Persia. II. The Remittances. humanity of his predecessors had always remitted, in some auspicious circumstance of their reign, the arrears of the public tribute; and they dextrously assumed the merit of resigning those claims which it was impracticable to enforce. “ Justinian, in the space of thirty-two years, has never granted a similar indulgence; and many of his subjects have renounced the possession of those lands whose value is insufficient to satisfy the demands of the treasury. To the cities which had suffered by hostile inroads, Anasta-

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“ sius promised a general exemption of seven years:
 “ the provinces of Justinian have been ravaged
 “ by the Persians and Arabs, the Huns and Sla-
 “ vonians; but his vain and ridiculous dispen-
 “ tion of a single year has been confined to those
 “ places which were actually taken by the enemy.”

Such is the language of the secret historian, who expressly denies that *any* indulgence was granted to Palestine after the revolt of the Samaritans; a false and odious charge, confuted by the authentic record, which attests a relief of thirteen centenaries of gold (fifty-two thousand pounds) obtained for that desolate province by the intercession of St. Sabas ⁸⁵.

III. Procopius has not condescended to explain the system of taxation, which fell like a hail-storm upon the land, like a devouring pestilence on its inhabitants: but we should become the accomplices of his malignity, if we imputed to Justinian alone the ancient though rigorous principle, that a whole district should be condemned to sustain the partial loss of the

Taxes.

persons or property of individuals. The *Annona*, or supply of corn for the use of the army and capital, was a grievous and arbitrary exaction, which exceeded, perhaps in a tenfold proportion, the ability of the farmer; and his distress was aggravated by the partial injustice of weights and measures, and the expence and labour of distant carriage. In a time of scarcity, an extraordinary requisition was made to the adjacent provinces of Thrace, Bithynia, and Phrygia: but the proprietors, after a wearisome journey and a peri-

lous navigation, received so inadequate a compensation, that they would have chosen the alternative of delivering both the corn and price at the doors of their granaries. These precautions might indicate a tender solicitude for the welfare of the capital; yet Constantinople did not escape the rapacious despotism of Justinian. Till his reign, the streights of the Bosphorus and Hellespont were open to the freedom of trade, and nothing was prohibited except the exportation of arms for the service of the Barbarians. At each of these gates of the city, a prætor was stationed, the minister of Imperial avarice; heavy customs were imposed on the vessels and their merchandize; the oppression was retaliated on the helpless consumer: the poor were afflicted by the artificial scarcity, and exorbitant price of the market; and a people, accustomed to depend on the liberality of their prince, might sometimes complain of the deficiency of water and bread⁸⁶. The *aerial* tribute, without a name, a law, or a definite object, was an annual gift of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, which the emperor accepted from his Prætorian præfect; and the means of payment were abandoned to the discretion of that powerful magistrate. IV. Even such a tax Monopolies. was less intolerable than the privilege of monopolies, which checked the fair competition of industry, and, for the sake of a small and dishonest gain, imposed an arbitrary burthen on the wants and luxury of the subject. “As soon (I transcribe the anecdotes) as the exclusive sale of silk

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XL.

Venality.

“ was usurped by the Imperial treasurer, a whole
 “ people, the manufacturers of Tyre and Bery-
 “ tus, was reduced to extreme misery, and either
 “ perished with hunger, or fled to the hostile do-
 “ minions of Persia”. A province might suffer
 by the decay of its manufactures, but in this
 example of silk, Procopius has partially overlook-
 ed the inestimable and lasting benefit which the
 empire received from the curiosity of Justinian.
 His addition of one-seventh to the ordinary price
 of copper-money may be interpreted with the same
 candour; and the alteration, which might be
 wise, appears to have been innocent; since he
 neither allayed the purity, nor enhanced the va-
 lue, of the gold coin⁸⁷, the legal measure of
 public and private payments. V. The ample
 jurisdiction required by the farmers of the reve-
 nue to accomplish their engagements, might be
 placed in an odious light, as if they had purchas-
 ed from the emperor the lives and fortunes of
 their fellow-citizens. And a more direct sale of
 honours and offices was transacted in the palace,
 with the permission, or at least with the conniv-
 ance, of Justinian and Theodora. The claims of
 merit, even those of favour, were disregarded,
 and it was almost reasonable to expect, that the
 bold adventurer who had undertaken the trade of
 a magistrate should find a rich compensation for
 infamy, labour, danger, the debts which he had
 contracted, and the heavy interest which he paid.
 A sense of the disgrace and mischief of this ve-
 nal practice, at length awakened the slumbering

virtue of Justinian ; and he attempted , by the sanction of oaths⁸⁸ and penalties , to guard the integrity of his government : but at the end of a year of perjury , his rigorous edict was suspended , and corruption licentiously abused her triumph over the impotence of the laws. VI. The testament of Eulalius , count of the domestics , declared the emperor his sole heir , on condition , however , that he should discharge his debts and legacies , allow to his three daughters a decent maintenance , and bestow each of them in marriage , with a portion of ten pounds of gold. But the splendid fortune of Eulalius had been consumed by fire ; and the inventory of his goods did not exceed the trifling sum of five hundred and sixty-four pieces of gold. A similar instance , in Grecian history , admonished the emperor of the honourable part prescribed for his imitation. He checked the selfish murmurs of the treasury , applauded the confidence of his friend , discharged the legacies and debts , educated the three virgins under the eye of the empress Theodora , and doubled the marriage portion which had satisfied the tenderness of their father⁸⁹. The humanity of a prince (for princes cannot be generous) is entitled to some praise ; yet even in this act of virtue we may discover the inveterate custom of supplanting the legal or natural heirs , which Procopius imputes to the reign of Justinian. His charge is supported by eminent names and scandalous examples ; neither widows nor orphans were spared ; and the art of soliciting or extorting or supposing testaments ,

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Testaments.

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was beneficially practised by the agents of the palace. This base and mischievous tyranny invades the security of private life; and the monarch who has indulged an appetite for gain will soon be tempted to anticipate the moment of succession, to interpret wealth as an evidence of guilt, and to proceed, from the claim of inheritance, to the power of confiscation. VII. Among the forms of rapine, a philosopher may be permitted to name the conversion of Pagan or heretical riches to the use of the faithful; but in the time of Justinian, this holy plunder was condemned by the sectaries alone, who became the victims of his orthodox avarice⁹⁰.

The ministers
of Justinian.

Dis honour might be ultimately reflected on the character of Justinian; but much of the guilt, and still more of the profit, was intercepted by the ministers, who were seldom promoted for their virtues, and not always selected for their talents⁹¹. The merits of Tribonian the quæstor will hereafter be weighed in the reformation of the Roman law; but the œconomy of the East was subordinate to the Prætorian præfect, and Procopius has justified his anecdotes by the portrait which he exposes in his public history, of the notorious vices of John of Cappadocia⁹². His knowledge was not borrowed from the schools⁹³, and his style was scarcely legible; but he excelled in the powers of native genius, to suggest the wisest counsels, and to find expedients in the most desperate situations. The corruption of his heart was equal to the vigour of his un-

John of Cap-
padocia.

derstanding. Although he was suspected of magic and Pagan superstition, he appeared insensible to the fear of God or the reproaches of man; and his aspiring fortune was raised on the death of thousands, the poverty of millions, the ruin of cities, and the desolation of provinces. From the dawn of light to the moment of dinner, he assiduously laboured to enrich his master and himself at the expence of the Roman world; the remainder of the day was spent in sensual and obscene pleasures, and the silent hours of the night were interrupted by the perpetual dread of the justice of an assassin. His abilities, perhaps his vices, recommended him to the lasting friendship of Justinian: the emperor yielded with reluctance to the fury of the people; his victory was displayed by the immediate restoration of their enemy; and they felt above ten years, under his oppressive administration, that he was stimulated by revenge, rather than instructed by misfortune. Their murmurs served only to fortify the resolution of Justinian; but the præfect, in the insolence of favour, provoked the resentment of Theodora, disdained a power before which every knee was bent, and attempted to sow the seeds of discord between the emperor and his beloved consort. Even Theodora herself was constrained to dissemble, to wait a favourable moment, and by an artful conspiracy to render John of Cappadocia the accomplice of his own destruction. At a time when Belisarius, unless he had been a hero, must have shewn himself a rebel, his wife Antonina,

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who enjoyed the secret confidence of the empress, communicated his feigned discontent to Euphemia the daughter of the præfect; the credulous virgin imparted to her father the dangerous project, and John, who might have known the value of oaths and promises, was tempted to accept a nocturnal, and almost treasonable, interview with the wife of Belisarius. An ambuscade of guards and eunuchs had been posted by the command of Theodora; they rushed with drawn swords to seize or to punish the guilty minister: he was saved by the fidelity of his attendants; but instead of appealing to a gracious sovereign, who had privately warned him of his danger, he pusillanimously fled to the sanctuary of the church. The favourite of Justinian was sacrificed to conjugal tenderness or domestic tranquillity; the conversion of a præfect into a priest extinguished his ambitious hopes; but the friendship of the emperor alleviated his disgrace, and he retained in the mild exile of Cyzicus an ample portion of his riches. Such imperfect revenge could not satisfy the unrelenting hatred of Theodora; the murder of his old enemy, the bishop of Cyzicus, afforded a decent pretence; and John of Cappadocia, whose actions had deserved a thousand deaths, was at last condemned for a crime of which he was innocent. A great minister, who had been invested with the honours of consul and patrician, was ignominiously scourged like the vilest of malefactors; a tattered cloak was the sole remnant of his fortunes; he was transported in a bark to the

place of his banishment at Antinopolis in Upper Egypt, and the præfect of the East begged his bread through the cities which had trembled at his name. During an exile of seven years, his life was protracted and threatened by the ingenious cruelty of Theodora; and when her death permitted the emperor to recal a servant whom he had abandoned with regret, the ambition of John of Cappadocia was reduced to the humble duties of the sacerdotal profession. His successors convinced the subjects of Justinian, that the arts of oppression might still be improved by experience and industry; the frauds of a Syrian banker were introduced into the administration of the finances; and the example of the præfect was diligently copied by the quæstor, the public and private treasurer, the governors of provinces, and the principal magistrates of the Eastern empire⁹⁴.

V. The *edifices* of Justinian were cemented with the blood and treasure of his people; but those stately structures appeared to announce the prosperity of the empire, and actually displayed the skill of their architects. Both the theory and practice of the arts which depend on mathematical science and mechanical power were cultivated under the patronage of the emperors; the fame of Archimedes was rivalled by Proclus and Anthemius; and if their *miracles* had been related by intelligent spectators, they might now enlarge the speculations, instead of exciting the distrust, of philosophers. A tradition has prevailed, that the Roman fleet was reduced to ashes in the

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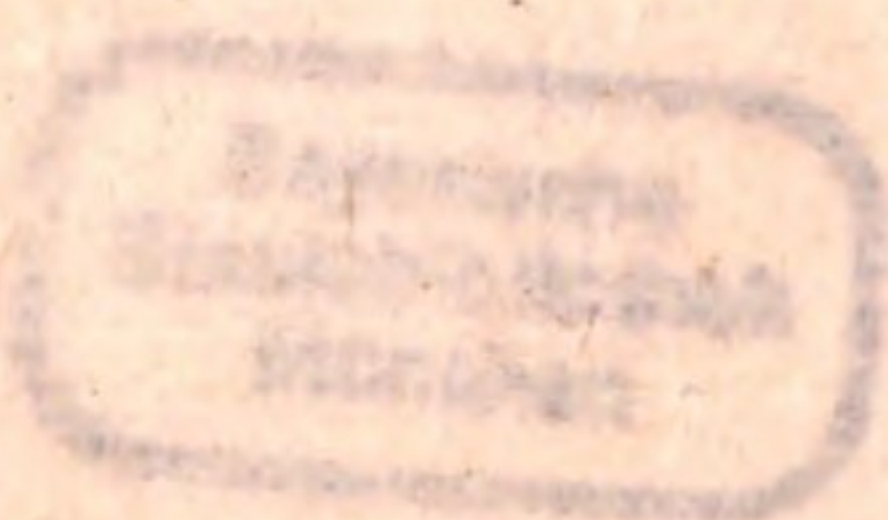
His edifices
and archi-
tects.

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port of Syracuse by the burning-glasses of Archimedes⁹⁵; and it is asserted, that a similar expedient was employed by Proclus to destroy the Gothic vessels in the harbour of Constantinople, and to protect his benefactor Anastasius against the bold enterprize of Vitalian⁹⁶. A machine was fixed on the walls of the city, consisting of an hexagon mirror of polished brass, with many smaller and moveable polygons to receive and reflect the rays of the meridian sun; and a consuming flame was darted to the distance, perhaps, of two hundred feet⁹⁷. The truth of these two extraordinary facts is invalidated by the silence of the most authentic historians; and the use of burning-glasses was never adopted in the attack or defence of places⁹⁸. Yet the admirable experiments of a French philosopher⁹⁹ have demonstrated the possibility of such a mirror; and, since it is possible, I am more disposed to attribute the art to the greatest mathematicians of antiquity, than to give the merit of the fiction to the idle fancy of a monk or a sophist. According to another story, Proclus applied sulphur to the destruction of the Gothic fleet¹⁰⁰; in a modern imagination, the name of sulphur is instantly connected with the suspicion of gun-powder, and that suspicion is propagated by the secret arts of his disciple Anthemius¹⁰¹. A citizen of Tralles in Asia had five sons, who were all distinguished in their respective professions by merit and success. Olympius excelled in the knowledge and practice of the Ro-

man jurisprudence. Dioscorus and Alexander became learned physicians; but the skill of the former was exercised for the benefit of his fellow-citizens, while his more ambitious brother acquired wealth and reputation at Rome. The fame of Metrodorus the grammarian, and of Anthemius the mathematician and architect, reached the ears of the emperor Justinian, who invited them to Constantinople; and while the one instructed the rising generation in the schools of eloquence, the other filled the capital and provinces with more lasting monuments of his art. In a trifling dispute relative to the walls or windows of their contiguous houses, he had been vanquished by the eloquence of his neighbour Zeno; but the orator was defeated in his turn by the master of mechanics, whose malicious, though harmless stratagems, are darkly represented by the ignorance of Agathias. In a lower room, Anthemius arranged several vessels or cauldrons of water, each of them covered by the wide bottom of a leathern tube, which rose to a narrow top, and was artificially conveyed among the joists and rafters of the adjacent building. A fire was kindled beneath the cauldron; the steam of the boiling water ascended through the tubes; the house was shaken by the efforts of imprisoned air, and its trembling inhabitants might wonder that the city was unconscious of the earthquake which they had felt. At another time, the friends of Zeno, as they sat at table, were dazzled by the intolerable light which flashed in their eyes from the reflect-

Foundation
of the church
of St. Sophia



CHAP. XL. ing mirrors of Anthemius: they were astonished by the noise which he produced from the collision of certain minute and sonorous particles; and the orator declared in tragic style to the senate, that a mere mortal must yield to the power of an antagonist, who shook the earth with the trident of Neptune, and imitated the thunder and lightning of Jove himself. The genius of Anthemius and his colleague Isidore the Milesian, was excited and employed by a prince, whose taste for architecture had degenerated into a mischievous and costly passion. His favourite architects submitted their designs and difficulties to Justinian, and discreetly confessed how much their laborious meditations were surpassed by the intuitive knowledge or celestial inspiration of an emperor, whose views were always directed to the benefit of his people, the glory of his reign, and the salvation of his soul¹⁰².

Foundation
of the church
of St. Sophia.

The principal church, which was dedicated by the founder of Constantinople to saint Sophia, or the eternal wisdom, had been twice destroyed by fire; after the exile of John Chrysostom, and during the *Nika* of the blue and green factions. No sooner did the tumult subside, than the Christian populace deplored their sacrilegious rashness; but they might have rejoiced in the calamity, had they foreseen the glory of the new temple, which at the end of forty days was strenuously undertaken by the piety of Justinian¹⁰³. The ruins were cleared away, a more spacious plan was described, and as it required the consent of some proprietors of ground, they obtained the most exorbitant terms

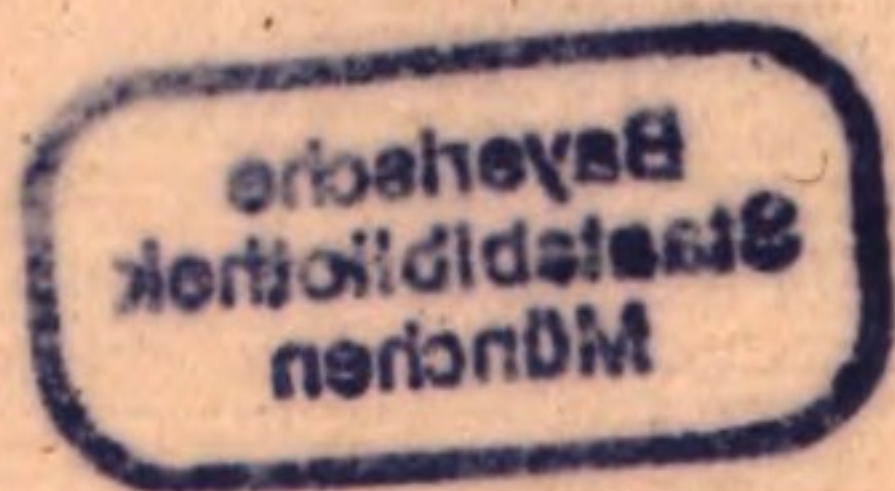
terms from the eager desires and timorous conscience of the monarch. Anthemius formed the design, and his genius directed the hands of ten thousand workmen, whose payment in pieces of fine silver was never delayed beyond the evening. The emperor himself, clad in a linen tunic, surveyed each day their rapid progress, and encouraged their diligence by his familiarity, his zeal, and his rewards. The new cathedral of St. Sophia was consecrated by the patriarch, five years, eleven months, and ten days from the first foundation; and in the midst of the solemn festival, Justinian exclaimed with devout vanity. "Glory be to God, who hath thought me worthy to accomplish so great a work; I have vanquished thee, O Solomon!" But the pride of the Roman Solomon, before twenty years had elapsed, was humbled by an earthquake, which overthrew the eastern part of the dome. Its splendour was again restored by the perseverance of the same prince; and in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, Justinian celebrated the second dedication of a temple, which remains, after twelve centuries, a stately monument of his fame. The architecture of St. Sophia, which is now converted into the principal mosque, has been imitated by the Turkish sultans, and that venerable pile continues to excite the fond admiration of the Greeks, and the more rational curiosity of European travellers. The eye of the spectator is disappointed by an irregular prospect of half-domes and shelving roofs: the western front, the principal approach, is destitute of

Description.



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simplicity and magnificence; and the scale of dimensions has been much surpassed by several of the Latin cathedrals. But the architect who first erected an *aerial* cupola, is entitled to the praise of bold design and skilful execution. The dome of St. Sophia, illuminated by four and twenty windows, is formed with so small a curve, that the depth is equal only to one-sixth of its diameter; the measure of that diameter is one hundred and fifteen feet, and the lofty center, where a crescent has supplanted the cross, rises to the perpendicular height of one hundred and eighty feet above the pavement. The circle which encompasses the dome, lightly reposes on four strong arches, and their weight is firmly supported by four massy piles, whose strength is assisted on the northern and southern sides by four columns of Egyptian granite. A Greek cross, inscribed in a quadrangle, represents the form of the edifice; the exact breadth is two hundred and forty-three feet, and two hundred and sixty-nine may be assigned for the extreme length from the sanctuary in the east to the nine western doors which open into the vestibule, and from thence into the *narthex* or exterior portico. That portico was the humble station of the penitents. The nave or body of the church was filled by the congregation of the faithful; but the two sexes were prudently distinguished, and the upper and lower galleries were allotted for the more private devotion of the women. Beyond the northern and southern piles, a balustrade, terminated on either side by



the thrones of the emperor and the patriarch, divided the nave from the choir: and the space, as far as the steps of the altar, was occupied by the clergy and singers. The altar itself, a name which insensibly became familiar to Christian ears, was placed in the eastern recess, artificially built in the form of a demi-cylinder; and this sanctuary communicated by several doors with the sacristy, the vestry, the baptistery, and the contiguous buildings, subservient either to the pomp of worship, or the private use of the ecclesiastical ministers. The memory of past calamities inspired Justinian with a wise resolution, that no wood, except for the doors, should be admitted into the new edifice; and the choice of the materials was applied to the strength, the lightness, or the splendour of the respective parts. The solid piles which sustained the cupola were composed of huge blocks of freestone, hewn into squares and triangles, fortified by circles of iron, and firmly cemented by the infusion of lead and quicklime: but the weight of the cupola was diminished by the levity of its substance, which consists either of pumice-stone that floats in the water, or of bricks from the isle of Rhodes, five times less ponderous than the ordinary sort. The whole frame of the edifice was constructed of brick; but those base materials were concealed by a crust of marble; and the inside of St. Sophia, the cupola, the two larger, and the six smaller, semi-domes, the walls, the hundred columns, and the pavement, delight even the eyes of

C H A P. Barbarians, with a rich and variegated picture.
 XL. A poet ¹⁰⁵, who beheld the primitive lustre of
 Marbles. St. Sophia, enumerates the colours, the shades,
 and the spots of ten or twelve marbles, jaspers,
 and porphyries, which nature had profusely diver-
 sified, and which were blended and contrasted
 as it were by a skilful painter. The triumph of
 Christ was adorned with the last spoils of Pagan-
 ism, but the greater part of these costly stones
 was extracted from the quarries of Asia Minor,
 the isles and continent of Greece, Egypt, Africa,
 and Gaul. Eight columns of porphyry, which
 Aurelian had placed in the temple of the sun,
 were offered by the piety of a Roman matron;
 eight others of green marble were presented by
 the ambitious zeal of the magistrates of Ephesus:
 both are admirable by their size and beauty, but
 every order of architecture disclaims their fan-
 tastic capitals. A variety of ornaments and figures
 was curiously expressed in mosaic; and the ima-
 ges of Christ, of the Virgin, of saints, and of
 angels, which have been defaced by Turkish
 fanaticism, were dangerously exposed to the super-
 stition of the Greeks. According to the sanctity
 of each object, the precious metals were distri-
 buted in thin leaves or in solid masses. The
 balustrade of the choir, the capitals of the
 pillars, the ornaments of the doors and galleries,
 were of gilt bronze; the spectator was dazzled
 by the glittering aspect of the cupola; the sanc-
 tuary contained forty thousand pound weight of
 silver; and the holy vases and vestments of the

altar were of the purest gold, enriched with C H A P.
 inestimable gems. Before the structure of the XL.
 church had arisen two cubits above the ground,
 forty-five thousand two hundred pounds were
 already consumed; and the whole expence Riches.
 amounted to three hundred and twenty thou-
 sand: each reader, according to the measure of
 his belief, may estimate their value either in
 gold or silver; but the sum of one million sterling
 is the result of the lowest computation. A
 magnificent temple is a laudable monument of
 national taste and religion, and the enthusiast
 who entered the dome of St. Sophia, might be
 tempted to suppose that it was the residence,
 or even the workmanship of the Deity. Yet
 how dull is the artifice, how insignificant is the
 labour, if it be compared with the formation of
 the vilest insect that crawls upon the surface of
 the temple!

So minute a description of an edifice which Churches and
palaces.
 time has respected, may attest the truth, and
 excuse the relation, of the innumerable works,
 both in the capital and provinces, which Justi-
 nian constructed on a smaller scale and less
 durable foundations ¹⁰⁶. In Constantinople alone,
 and the adjacent suburbs, he dedicated twenty-
 five churches to the honour of Christ, the Virgin,
 and the saints: most of these churches were
 decorated with marble and gold; and their
 various situation was skilfully chosen in a popu-
 lous square, or a pleasant grove; on the margin
 of the sea-shore, or on some lofty eminence

e H A P.
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which overlooked the continents of Europe and Asia. The church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople, and that of St. John at Ephesus, appear to have been framed on the same model: their domes aspired to imitate the cupolas of St. Sophia; but the altar was more judiciously placed under the center of the dome, at the junction of four stately porticoes, which more accurately expressed the figure of the Greek cross. The Virgin of Jerusalem might exult in the temple erected by her Imperial votary on a most ungrateful spot, which afforded neither ground nor materials to the architect. A level was formed, by raising part of a deep valley to the height of the mountain. The stones of a neighbouring quarry were hewn into regular forms; each block was fixed on a peculiar carriage drawn by forty of the strongest oxen, and the roads were widened for the passage of such enormous weights. Lebanon furnished her loftiest cedars for the timbers of the church; and the seasonable discovery of a vein of red marble, supplied its beautiful columns, two of which, the supporters of the exterior portico, were esteemed the largest in the world. The pious munificence of the emperor was diffused over the Holy Land; and if reason should condemn the monasteries of both sexes which were built or restored by Justinian, yet charity must applaud the wells which he sunk, and the hospitals which he founded, for the relief of the weary pilgrims. The schismatical temper of Egypt was ill-entitled to the royal bounty;

but in Syria and Africa some remedies were applied to the disasters of wars and earthquakes, and both Carthage and Antioch, emerging from their ruins, might revere the name of their gracious benefactor ¹⁰⁷. Almost every saint in the calendar acquired the honours of a temple; almost every city of the empire obtained the solid advantages of bridges, hospitals, and aqueducts; but the severe liberality of the monarch disdained to indulge his subjects in the popular luxury of baths and theatres. While Justinian laboured for the public service, he was not unmindful of his own dignity and ease. The Byzantine palace, which had been damaged by the conflagration, was restored with new magnificence; and some notion may be conceived of the whole edifice, by the vestibule or hall, which, from the doors perhaps, or the roof, was furnamed *chalce*, or the brazen. The dome of a spacious quadrangle was supported by massy pillars; the pavement and walls were incrustated with many-coloured marbles—the emerald green of Laconia, the fiery red, and the white Phrygian stone intersected with veins of a sea-green hue: the mosaic paintings of the dome and sides represented the glories of the African and Italian triumphs. On the Asiatic shore of the Propontis, at a small distance to the east of Chalcedon, the costly palace and gardens of Heræum ¹⁰⁸ were prepared for the summer residence of Justinian, and more especially of Theodora. The poets of the age have celebrated the rare alliance of nature and art, the harmony of

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the nymphs of the groves, the fountains, and the waves; yet the crowd of attendants who followed the court complained of their inconvenient lodgings¹⁰⁹, and the nymphs were too often alarmed by the famous Porphyrio, a whale of ten cubits in breadth, and thirty in length, who was stranded at the mouth of the river Sangaris, after he had infested more than half a century the seas of Constantinople¹¹⁰.

Fortifications
of Europe.

The fortifications of Europe and Asia were multiplied by Justinian; but the repetition of those timid and fruitless precautions exposes to a philosophic eye the debility of the empire¹¹¹. From Belgrade to the Euxine, from the conflux of the Save to the mouth of the Danube, a chain of above fourscore fortified places was extended along the banks of the great river. Single watch-towers were changed into spacious citadels; vacant walls, which the engineers contracted or enlarged according to the nature of the ground, were filled with colonies or garrisons; a strong fortress defended the ruins of Trajan's bridge¹¹², and several military stations affected to spread beyond the Danube the pride of the Roman name. But that name was divested of its terrors; the Barbarians, in their annual inroads, passed, and contemptuously repassed, before these useless bulwarks; and the inhabitants of the frontier, instead of reposing under the shadow of the general defence, were compelled to guard, with incessant vigilance, their separate habitations. The solitude of ancient cities was replenished; the new

foundations of Justinian acquired, perhaps too hastily, the epithets of impregnable and populous; and the auspicious place of his own nativity attracted the grateful reverence of the vainest of princes. Under the name of *Justiniana prima*, the obscure village of Tauresium became the seat of an archbishop and a præfect, whose jurisdiction extended over seven warlike provinces of Illyricum¹¹³; and the corrupt appellation of *Giustendil* still indicates, about twenty miles to the south of Sophia, the residence of a Turkish sanjak¹¹⁴. For the use of the emperor's countrymen, a cathedral, a palace, and an aqueduct, were speedily constructed; the public and private edifices were adapted to the greatness of a royal city; and the strength of the walls resisted, during the lifetime of Justinian, the unskillful assaults of the Huns and Slavonians. Their progress was sometimes retarded, and their hopes of rapine were disappointed, by the innumerable castles, which in the provinces of Dacia, Epirus, Thessaly, Macedonia, and Thrace, appeared to cover the whole face of the country. Six hundred of these forts were built or repaired by the emperor; but it seems reasonable to believe, that the far greater part consisted only of a stone or brick tower, in the midst of a square or circular area, which was surrounded by a wall and ditch, and afforded in a moment of danger some protection to the peasants and cattle of the neighbouring villages¹¹⁵. Yet these military works, which exhausted the public treasure, could not remove

C H A P. XL. the just apprehensions of Justinian and his European subjects. The warm baths of Anchialus in Thrace were rendered as safe as they were salutary; but the rich pastures of Thessalonica were foraged by the Scythian cavalry; the delicious vale of Tempe, three hundred miles from the Danube, was continually alarmed by the sound of war¹¹⁶; and no unfortified spot, however distant or solitary, could securely enjoy the blessings of peace. The streights of Thermopylæ, which seemed to protect, but which had so often betrayed, the safety of Greece, were diligently strengthened by the labours of Justinian. From the edge of the seashore, through the forests and vallies, and as far as the summit of the Thessalian mountains, a strong wall was continued, which occupied every practicable entrance. Instead of an hasty crowd of peasants, a garrison of two thousand soldiers was stationed along the rampart; granaries of corn, and reservoirs of water, were provided for their use; and by a precaution that inspired the cowardice which it foresaw, convenient fortresses were erected for their retreat. The walls of Corinth, overthrown by an earthquake, and the mouldering bulwarks of Athens and Platea, were carefully restored; the Barbarians were discouraged by the prospect of successive and painful sieges; and the naked cities of Peloponnesus were covered by the fortifications of the isthmus of Corinth. At the extremity of Europe, another peninsula, the Thracian Chersonesus, runs three days journey into the sea, to form, with the adjacent shores of

Asia, the streights of the Hellespont. The intervals between eleven populous towns were filled by lofty woods, fair pastures, and arable lands; and the isthmus, of thirty-seven stadia or furlongs, had been fortified by a Spartan general nine hundred years before the reign of Justinian¹¹⁷. In an age of freedom and valour, the slightest rampart may prevent a surprise; and Procopius appears insensible of the superiority of ancient times, while he praises the solid construction and double parapet of a wall, whose long arms stretched on either side into the sea; but whose strength was deemed insufficient to guard the Chersonesus, if each city, and particularly Gallipoli and Sestus, had not been secured by their peculiar fortifications. The *long* wall, as it was emphatically styled, was a work as disgraceful in the object, as it was respectable in the execution. The riches of a capital diffuse themselves over the neighbouring country; and the territory, of Constantinople, a paradise of nature, was adorned with the luxurious gardens and villas of the senators and opulent citizens. But their wealth served only to attract the bold and rapacious Barbarians; the noblest of the Romans, in the bosom of peaceful indolence, were led away into Scythian captivity, and their sovereign might view from his palace the hostile flames which were insolently spread to the gates of the Imperial city. At the distance only of forty miles, Anastasius was constrained to establish a last frontier; his long wall of sixty miles from the Pro-

CHAP. XL. pontis to the Euxine, proclaimed the impotence of his arms; and as the danger became more imminent, new fortifications were added by the indefatigable prudence of Justinian¹¹⁸.

Security of
Asia, after the
conquest of
Isauria.

Asia Minor, after the submission of the Isaurians¹¹⁹, remained without enemies and without fortifications. Those bold savages, who had disdained to be the subjects of Gallienus, persisted two hundred and thirty years in a life of independence and rapine. The most successful princes respected the strength of the mountains and the despair of the natives; their fierce spirit was sometimes soothed with gifts, and sometimes restrained by terror; and a military count, with three legions, fixed his permanent and ignominious station in the heart of the Roman provinces¹²⁰. But no sooner was the vigilance of power relaxed or diverted, than the light-armed squadrons descended from the hills, and invaded the peaceful plenty of Asia. Although the Isaurians were not remarkable for stature or bravery, want rendered them bold, and experience made them skilful in the exercise of predatory war. They advanced with secrecy and speed to the attack of villages and defenceless towns; their flying parties have sometimes touched the Hellespont, the Euxine and the gates of Tarsus, Antioch, or Damascus¹²¹; and the spoil was lodged in their inaccessible mountains, before the Roman troops had received their orders, or the distant province had computed its loss. The guilt of rebellion and robbery excluded them from

the rights of national enemies; and the magistrates were instructed, by an edict, that the trial or punishment of an Isaurian, even on the festival of Easter, was a meritorious act of justice and piety¹²². If the captives were condemned to domestic slavery, they maintained, with their sword or dagger, the private quarrel of their masters; and it was found expedient for the public tranquillity, to prohibit the service of such dangerous retainers. When their countryman Tarcalissæus or Zeno ascended the throne, he invited a faithful and formidable band of Isaurians, who insulted the court and city, and were rewarded by an annual tribute of five thousand pounds of gold. But the hopes of fortune depopulated the mountains, luxury enervated the hardiness of their minds and bodies, and in proportion as they mixed with mankind, they became less qualified for the enjoyment of poor and solitary freedom. After the death of Zeno, his successor Anastasius suppressed their pensions, exposed their persons to the revenge of the people, banished them from Constantinople, and prepared to sustain a war, which left only the alternative of victory or servitude. A brother of the last emperor usurped the title of Augustus, his cause was powerfully supported by the arms, the treasures, and the magazines, collected by Zeno; and the native Isaurians must have formed the smallest portion of the hundred and fifty thousand Barbarians under his standard, which was sanctified, for the first time, by the presence

C H A P. of a fighting bishop. Their disorderly numbers
 XL. were vanquished in the plains of Phrygia by the
 A. D. valour and discipline of the Goths; but a war
 492—498. of six years almost exhausted the courage of the
 emperor¹²³. The Isaurians retired to their moun-
 tains; their fortresses were successively besieged
 and ruined; their communication with the sea
 was intercepted; the bravest of their leaders died
 in arms; the surviving chiefs, before their exe-
 cution, were dragged in chains through the hip-
 podrome; a colony of their youth was trans-
 planted into Thrace, and the remnant of the
 people submitted to the Roman government. Yet
 some generations elapsed before their minds were
 reduced to the level of slavery. The populous
 villages of Mount Taurus were filled with horse-
 men and archers; they resisted the imposition of
 tributes, but they recruited the armies of Justi-
 nian; and his civil magistrates, the proconsul of
 Cappadocia, the count of Isauria, and the præ-
 tors of Lycaonia and Pisidia, were invested with
 military power to restrain the licentious practice
 of rapes and assassinations¹²⁴.

Fortifications
 of the em-
 pire, from the
 Euxine to the
 Persian fron-
 tier.

If we extend our view from the tropic to
 the mouth of the Tanais, we may observe on
 one hand, the precautions of Justinian to curb
 the savages of Æthiopia¹²⁵, and on the other,
 the long walls which he constructed in Crimæa
 for the protection of his friendly Goths, a
 colony of three thousand shepherds and war-
 riors¹²⁶. From that peninsula to Trebizond,
 the eastern curve of the Euxine was secured
 by forts, by alliance, or by religion; and

the possession of *Lazica*, the Colchos of ancient, the Mingrelia of modern, geography, soon became the object of an important war. Trebizond, in after-times the seat of a romantic empire, was indebted to the liberality of Justinian for a church, an aqueduct, and a castle, whose ditches are hewn in the solid rock. From that maritime city, a frontier line of five hundred miles may be drawn to the fortrefs of Circesium, the last Roman station on the Euphrates ¹²⁷. Above Trebizond immediately, and five days journey to the south, the country rises into dark forests and craggy mountains, as savage though not so lofty as the Alps and the Pyrenees. In this rigorous climate ¹²⁸, where the snows seldom melt, the fruits are tardy and tasteless, even honey is poisonous; the most industrious tillage would be confined to some pleasant vallies; and the pastoral tribes obtained a scanty sustenance from the flesh and milk of their cattle. The *Chalybians* ¹²⁹ derived their name and temper from the iron quality of the soil; and, since the days of Cyrus, they might produce, under the various appellations of Chaldæans and Zanians, an uninterrupted prescription of war and rapine. Under the reign of Justinian, they acknowledged the God and the emperor of the Romans, and seven fortresses were built in the most accessible passes, to exclude the ambition of the Persian monarch ¹³⁰. The principal source of the Euphrates descends from the Chalybian mountains, and seems to flow towards the west and the

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Euxine; bending to the south-west, the river passes under the walls of Satala and Melitene (which were restored by Justinian as the bulwarks of the lesser Armenia), and gradually approaches the Mediterranean sea; till at length, repelled by Mount Taurus¹³¹, the Euphrates inclines his long and flexible course to the south-east, and the gulf of Persia. Among the Roman cities beyond the Euphrates, we distinguish two recent foundations, which were named from Theodosius, and the relics of the martyrs; and two capitals, Amida and Edessa, which are celebrated in the history of every age. Their strength was proportioned by Justinian to the danger of their situation. A ditch and palisade might be sufficient to resist the artless force of the cavalry of Scythia; but more elaborate works were required to sustain a regular siege against the arms and treasures of the great king. His skilful engineers understood the methods of conducting deep mines, and of raising platforms to the level of the rampart: he shook the strongest battlements with his military engines, and sometimes advanced to the assault with a line of moveable turrets on the backs of elephants. In the great cities of the East, the disadvantage of space, perhaps of position, was compensated by the zeal of the people, who seconded the garrison in the defence of their country and religion; and the fabulous promise of the Son of God, that Edessa should never be taken, filled the citizens with valiant confidence, and chilled the besiegers with doubt
and

and dismay ¹³². The subordinate towns of Armenia and Mesopotamia were diligently strengthened, and the posts which appeared to have any command of ground or water, were occupied by numerous forts, substantially built of stone, or more hastily erected with the obvious materials of earth and brick. The eye of Justinian investigated every spot; and his cruel precautions might attract the war into some lonely vale, whose peaceful natives, connected by trade and marriage, were ignorant of national discord and the quarrels of princes. Westward of the Euphrates, a sandy desert extends above six hundred miles to the Red Sea. Nature had interposed a vacant solitude between the ambition of two rival empires: the Arabians, till Mahomet arose, were formidable only as robbers; and in the proud security of peace, the fortifications of Syria were neglected on the most vulnerable side.

But the national enmity, at least the effects of that enmity, had been suspended by a truce, which continued above fourscore years. An ambassador from the emperor Zeno, accompanied the rash and unfortunate Perozes, in his expedition against the Nephthalites or white Huns, whose conquests had been stretched from the Caspian to the heart of India, whose throne was enriched with emeralds ¹³³, and whose cavalry was supported by a line of two thousand elephants ¹³⁴. The Persians were twice circumvented, in a situation which made valour useless and flight impossible; and the double victory of the Huns

Death of Perozes, king of Persia.
A. D. 482.

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The Persian
war,
A. D.
502—505.

was atchieved by military stratagem. They dismissed their royal captive after he had submitted to adore the majesty of a Barbarian; and the humiliation was poorly evaded by the casuistical subtilty of the Magi, who instructed Perozes to direct his intention to the rising sun. The indignant successor of Cyrus forgot his danger and his gratitude; he renewed the attack with headstrong fury, and lost both his army and his life¹³⁵. The death of Perozes abandoned Persia to her foreign and domestic enemies; and twelve years of confusion elapsed before his son Cabades or Kobad could embrace any designs of ambition or revenge. The unkind parsimony of Anastasius was the motive or pretence of a Roman war¹³⁶; the Huns and Arabs marched under the Persian standard, and the fortifications of Armenia and Mesopotamia were, at that time, in a ruinous or imperfect condition. The emperor returned his thanks to the governor and people of Martyropolis, for the prompt surrender of a city which could not be successfully defended, and the conflagration of Theodosiopolis might justify the conduct of their prudent neighbours. Amida sustained a long and destructive siege: at the end of three months, the loss of fifty thousand of the soldiers of Cabades was not balanced by any prospect of success, and it was in vain that the Magi deduced a flattering prediction from the indecency of the women on the ramparts who had revealed their most secret charms to the eyes of the assailants. At length, in a silent night, they ascended the

most accessible tower, which was guarded only by some monks, oppressed, after the duties of a festival, with sleep and wine. Scaling-ladders were applied at the dawn of day; the presence of Cabades, his stern command, and his drawn sword, compelled the Persians to vanquish; and before it was sheathed, fourscore thousand of the inhabitants had expiated the blood of their companions. After the siege of Amida, the war continued three years, and the unhappy frontier tasted the full measure of its calamities. The gold of Anastasius was offered too late, the number of his troops was defeated by the number of their generals; the country was stripped of its inhabitants, and both the living and the dead were abandoned to the wild beasts of the desert. The resistance of Edessa, and the deficiency of spoil, inclined the mind of Cabades to peace: he sold his conquests for an exorbitant price; and the same line, though marked with slaughter and devastation, still separated the two empires. To avert the repetition of the same evils, Anastasius resolved to found a new colony, so strong, that it should defy the power of the Persian, so far advanced towards Assyria, that its stationary troops might defend the province by the menace or operation of offensive war. For this purpose, the town of Dara¹³⁷, fourteen miles from Nisibis, and four days journey from the Tigris, was peopled and adorned; the hasty works of Anastasius were improved by the perseverance of Justinian; and without insisting on places less import-

Fortifications
of Dara.

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ant, the fortifications of Dara may represent the military architecture of the age. The city was surrounded with two walls, and the interval between them, of fifty paces, afforded a retreat to the cattle of the besieged. The inner wall was a monument of strength and beauty: it measured sixty feet from the ground, and the height of the towers was one hundred feet; the loop-holes, from whence an enemy might be annoyed with missile weapons, were small, but numerous; the soldiers were planted along the rampart, under the shelter of double galleries, and a third platform, spacious and secure, was raised on the summit of the towers. The exterior wall appears to have been less lofty, but more solid; and each tower was protected by a quadrangular bulwark. A hard rocky soil resisted the tools of the miners, and on the south-east, where the ground was more tractable, their approach was retarded by a new work, which advanced in the shape of an half-moon. The double and treble ditches were filled with a stream of water; and in the management of the river, the most skilful labour was employed to supply the inhabitants, to distress the besiegers, and to prevent the mischiefs of a natural or artificial inundation. Dara continued more than sixty years to fulfil the wishes of its founders, and to provoke the jealousy of the Persians, who incessantly complained, that this impregnable fortress had been constructed in manifest violation of the treaty of peace between the two empires.

Between the Euxine and the Caspian, the countries of Colchos, Iberia, and Albania, are intersected in every direction by the branches of Mount Caucasus; and the two principal *gates*, or *passes*, from north to south, have been frequently confounded in the geography both of the ancients and moderns. The name of *Caspian* or *Albanian* gates, is properly applied to Derbend ¹³⁸, which occupies a short declivity between the mountains and the sea: the city, if we give credit to local tradition, had been founded by the Greeks; and this dangerous entrance was fortified by the kings of Persia, with a mole, double walls, and doors of iron. The *Iberian* gates ¹³⁹ are formed by a narrow passage of six miles in Mount Caucasus, which opens from the northern side of Iberia or Georgia, into the plain that reaches to the Tanais and the Volga. A fortress, designed by Alexander perhaps, or one of his successors, to command that important pass, had descended by right of conquest or inheritance to a prince of the Huns, who offered it for a moderate price to the emperor: but while Anastasius paused, while he timorously computed the cost and the distance, a more vigilant rival interposed, and Cabades forcibly occupied the streights of Caucasus. The Albanian and Iberian gates excluded the horsemen of Scythia from the shortest and most practicable roads, and the whole front of the mountains was covered by the rampart of Gog and Magog, the long wall which has excited the curiosity of an Arabian caliph ¹⁴⁰ and a

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XL.
The Caspian
or Iberian
gates.

C H A P. XL. Russian conqueror¹⁴¹. According to a recent description, huge stones seven feet thick, twenty-one feet in length or height, are artificially joined without iron or cement, to compose a wall, which runs above three hundred miles from the shores of Derbend, over the hills, and through the valleys of Daghestan and Georgia. Without a vision, such a work might be undertaken by the policy of Cabades; without a miracle, it might be accomplished by his son, so formidable to the Romans under the name of Chosroes; so dear to the Orientals, under the appellation of Nushirwan. The Persian monarch held in his hand the keys both of peace and war; but he stipulated, in every treaty, that Justinian should contribute to the expence of a common barrier, which equally protected the two empires from the inroads of the Scythians¹⁴².

VII. Justinian suppressed the schools of Athens and the consulship of Rome, which had given so many sages and heroes to mankind. Both these institutions had long since degenerated from their primitive glory; yet some reproach may be justly inflicted on the avarice and jealousy of a prince, by whose hand such venerable ruins were destroyed.

The schools
of Athens.

Athens, after her Persian triumphs, adopted the philosophy of Ionia and the rhetoric of Sicily; and these studies became the patrimony of a city, whose inhabitants, about thirty thousand males, condensed, within the period of a single life, the genius of ages and millions. Our sense of the dig-

nity of human nature, is exalted by the simple recollection, that Isocrates ¹⁴³ was the companion of Plato and Xenophon; that he assisted, perhaps with the historian Thucydides, at the first representations of the Oedipus of Sophocles and the Iphigenia of Euripides; and that his pupils Æschines and Demosthenes contended for the crown of patriotism in the presence of Aristotle, the master of Theophrastus, who taught at Athens with the founders of the Stoic and Epicurean sects ¹⁴⁴. The ingenuous youth of Attica enjoyed the benefits of their domestic education, which was communicated without envy to the rival cities. Two thousand disciples heard the lessons of Theophrastus ¹⁴⁵; the schools of rhetoric must have been still more populous than those of philosophy; and a rapid succession of students diffused the fame of their teachers, as far as the utmost limits of the Grecian language and name. Those limits were enlarged by the victories of Alexander; the arts of Athens survived her freedom and dominion; and the Greek colonies which the Macedonians planted in Egypt, and scattered over Asia, undertook long and frequent pilgrimages to worship the Muses in their favourite temple on the banks of the Ilissus. The Latin conquerors respectfully listened to the instructions of their subjects and captives; the names of Cicero and Horace were enrolled in the schools of Athens; and after the perfect settlement of the Roman empire, the natives of Italy, of Africa, and of Britain, conversed in the gro-

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ves of the academy with their fellow-students of the East. The studies of philosophy and eloquence are congenial to a popular state, which encourages the freedom of enquiry, and submits only to the force of persuasion. In the republics of Greece and Rome, the art of speaking was the powerful engine of patriotism or ambition; and the schools of rhetoric poured forth a colony of statesmen and legislators. When the liberty of public debate was suppressed, the orator, in the honourable profession of an advocate, might plead the cause of innocence and justice; he might abuse his talents in the more profitable trade of panegyric; and the same precepts continued to dictate the fanciful declamations of the sophist, and the chaster beauties of historical composition. The systems which professed to unfold the nature of God, of man, and of the universe, entertained the curiosity of the philosophic student; and according to the temper of his mind, he might doubt with the sceptics, or decide with the stoics, sublimely speculate with Plato, or severely argue with Aristotle. The pride of the adverse sects had fixed an unattainable term of moral happiness and perfection: but the race was glorious and salutary; the disciples of Zeno, and even those of Epicurus, were taught both to act and to suffer; and the death of Petronius was not less effectual than that of Seneca, to humble a tyrant by the discovery of his impotence. The light of science could not indeed be confined within the walls of Athens. Her incomparable writers address them-

selves to the human race; the living masters emigrated to Italy and Asia; Berytus, in later times, was devoted to the study of the law; astronomy and physic were cultivated in the musæum of Alexandria; but the Attic schools of rhetoric and philosophy maintained their superior reputation from the Peloponnesian war to the reign of Justinian. Athens, though situate in a barren soil, possessed a pure air, a free navigation, and the monuments of ancient art. That sacred retirement was seldom disturbed by the business of trade or government; and the last of the Athenians were distinguished by their lively wit, the purity of their taste and language, their social manners, and some traces, at least in discourse, of the magnanimity of their fathers. In the suburbs of the city, the *academy* of the Platonists, the *lycæum* of the Peripatetics, the *portico* of the Stoics, and the *garden* of the Epicureans, were planted with trees and decorated with statues; and the philosophers, instead of being immured in a cloyster, delivered their instructions in spacious and pleasant walks, which, at different hours, were consecrated to the exercises of the mind and body. The genius of the founders still lived in those venerable seats; the ambition of succeeding to the masters of human reason, excited a generous emulation; and the merit of the candidates was determined, on each vacancy, by the free voices of an enlightened people. The Athenian professors were paid by their disciples: according to their mutual wants and abilities, the price ap-

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pears to have varied from a mina to a talent; and Isocrates himself, who derides the avarice of the sophists, required in his school of rhetoric, about thirty pounds from each of his hundred pupils. The wages of industry are just and honourable, yet the same Isocrates shed tears at the first receipt of a stipend; the Stoic might blush when he was hired to preach the contempt of money; and I should be sorry to discover, that Aristotle or Plato so far degenerated from the example of Socrates, as to exchange knowledge for gold. But some property of lands and houses was settled by the permission of the laws, and the legacies of deceased friends, on the philosophic chairs of Athens. Epicurus bequeathed to his disciples the gardens which he had purchased for eighty minæ or two hundred and fifty pounds, with a fund sufficient for their frugal subsistence and monthly festivals ¹⁴⁶; and the patrimony of Plato afforded an annual rent, which, in eight centuries, was gradually encreased from three to one thousand pieces of gold ¹⁴⁷. The schools of Athens were protected by the wisest and most virtuous of the Roman princes. The library which Hadrian founded, was placed in a portico adorned with pictures, statues, and a roof of alabaster, and supported by one hundred columns of Phrygian marble. The public salaries were assigned by the generous spirit of the Antonines; and each professor, of politics, of rhetoric, of the Platonic, the Peripatetic, the Stoic, and the Epicurean philosophy, received an annual stipend of ten

thousand drachmæ, or more than three hundred pounds sterling ¹⁴⁸. After the death of Marcus, these liberal donations, and the privileges attached to the *thrones* of science, were abolished and revived, diminished and enlarged: but some vestige of royal bounty may be found under the successors of Constantine; and their arbitrary choice of an unworthy candidate might tempt the philosophers of Athens to regret the days of independence and poverty ¹⁴⁹. It is remarkable, that the impartial favour of the Antonines was bestowed on the four adverse sects of philosophy, which they considered as equally useful or at least as equally innocent. Socrates had formerly been the glory and the reproach of his country; and the first lessons of Epicurus so strangely scandalized the pious ears of the Athenians, that by his exile, and that of his antagonists, they silenced all vain disputes concerning the nature of the gods. But in the ensuing year they recalled the hasty decree, restored the liberty of the schools, and were convinced by the experience of ages, that the moral character of philosophers is not affected by the diversity of their theological speculations ¹⁵⁰.

The Gothic arms were less fatal to the schools of Athens than the establishment of a new religion, whose ministers superseded the exercise of reason, resolved every question by an article of faith, and condemned the infidel or sceptic to eternal flames. In many a volume of laborious controversy, they exposed the weakness of the

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They are
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Proclus.

understanding and the corruption of the heart, insulted human nature in the fages of antiquity, and proscribed the spirit of philosophical enquiry, so repugnant to the doctrine, or at least to the temper, of an humble believer. The surviving sect of the Platonists, whom Plato would have blushed to acknowledge, extravagantly mingled a sublime theory with the practice of superstition and magic; and as they remained alone in the midst of a Christian world, they indulged a secret rancour against the government of the church and state, whose severity was still suspended over their heads. About a century after the reign of Julian¹⁵¹, Proclus¹⁵² was permitted to teach in the philosophic chair of the academy, and such was his industry, that he frequently, in the same day, pronounced five lessons, and composed seven hundred lines. His sagacious mind explored the deepest questions of morals and metaphysics, and he ventured to urge eighteen arguments against the Christian doctrine of the creation of the world. But in the intervals of study, he *personally* conversed with Pan, Æsculapius, and Minerva, in whose mysteries he was secretly initiated, and whose prostrate statues he adored; in the devout persuasion that the philosopher, who is a citizen of the universe, should be the priest of its various deities. An eclipse of the sun announced his approaching end; and his life, with that of his scholar Isidore¹⁵³, compiled by two of their most learned disciples, exhibits a deplorable picture of the second childhood of human reason. Yet the

golden chain, as it was fondly styled, of the Platonic succession, continued forty-four years from the death of Proclus to the edict of Justinian¹⁵⁴, which imposed a perpetual silence on the schools of Athens, and excited the grief and indignation of the few remaining votaries of Grecian science and superstition. Seven friends and philosophers, Diogenes and Hermias, Eulalius and Priscian, Damascius, Isidore, and Simplicius, who dissented from the religion of their sovereign, embraced the resolution of seeking in a foreign land the freedom which was denied in their native country. They had heard, and they credulously believed, that the republic of Plato was realized in the despotic government of Persia, and that a patriot king reigned over the happiest and most virtuous of nations. They were soon astonished by the natural discovery, that Persia resembled the other countries of the globe; that Chosroes, who affected the name of a philosopher, was vain, cruel, and ambitious; that bigotry, and a spirit of intolerance, prevailed among the Magi; that the nobles were haughty, the courtiers servile, and the magistrates unjust; that the guilty sometimes escaped, and that the innocent were often oppressed. The disappointment of the philosophers provoked them to overlook the real virtues of the Persians; and they were scandalized, more deeply perhaps than became their profession, with the plurality of wives and concubines, the incestuous marriages, and the custom of exposing dead bodies to the dogs and

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His succeſ-

ſors,

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C H A P. XL. vultures, instead of hiding them in the earth, or consuming them with fire. Their repentance was expressed by a precipitate return, and they loudly declared that they had rather die on the borders of the empire, than enjoy the wealth and favour of the Barbarian. From this journey, however, they derived a benefit which reflects the purest lustre on the character of Chosroes. He required, that the seven sages who had visited the court of Persia, should be exempted from the penal laws which Justinian enacted against his Pagan subjects; and this privilege, expressly stipulated in a treaty of peace, was guarded by the vigilance of a powerful mediator¹⁵⁵. Simplicius and his companions ended their lives in peace and obscurity; and as they left no disciples, they terminate the long list of Grecian philosophers, who may be justly praised, notwithstanding their defects, as the wisest and most virtuous of their contemporaries. The writings of Simplicius are now extant. His physical and metaphysical commentaries on Aristotle have passed away with the fashion of the times; but his moral interpretation of Epictetus is preserved in the library of nations, as a classic book, most excellently adapted to direct the will, to purify the heart, and to confirm the understanding, by a just confidence in the nature both of God and man.

The last of
the philoso-
phers.

The Roman
consulship
extinguished
by Justinian,
A. D. 541.

About the same time that Pythagoras first invented the appellation of philosopher, liberty and the consulship were founded at Rome by the elder Brutus. The revolutions of the consular office,

which may be viewed in the successive lights of a substance, a shadow and a name, have been occasionally mentioned in the present history. The first magistrates of the republic had been chosen by the people, to exercise, in the senate and in the camp, the powers of peace and war, which were afterwards translated to the emperors. But the tradition of ancient dignity was long revered by the Romans and Barbarians. A Gothic historian applauds the consulship of Theodoric as the height of all temporal glory and greatness¹⁵⁶; the king of Italy himself congratulates those annual favourites of fortune, who, without the cares, enjoyed the splendour of the throne; and at the end of a thousand years, two consuls were created by the sovereigns of Rome and Constantinople, for the sole purpose of giving a date to the year, and a festival to the people. But the expences of this festival, in which the wealthy and the vain aspired to surpass their predecessors, insensibly arose to the enormous sum of fourscore thousand pounds; the wisest senators declined an useless honour, which involved the certain ruin of their families; and to this reluctance I should impute the frequent chasms in the last age of the consular *Fasti*. The predecessors of Justinian had assisted from the public treasures the dignity of the less opulent candidates; the avarice of that prince preferred the cheaper and more convenient method of advice and regulation¹⁵⁷. Seven *processions* or spectacles were the number to which his edict confined the horse and chariot races,

CHAP. XL. the athletic sports, the music, and pantomimes of the theatre, and the hunting of wild beasts; and small pieces of silver were discreetly substituted to the gold metals, which had always excited tumult and drunkenness, when they were scattered with a profuse hand among the populace. Notwithstanding these precautions, and his own example, the succession of consuls finally ceased in the thirteenth year of Justinian, whose despotic temper might be gratified by the silent extinction of a title which admonished the Romans of their ancient freedom¹⁵⁸. Yet the annual consulship still lived in the minds of the people; they fondly expected its speedy restoration; they applauded the gracious condescension of successive princes, by whom it was assumed in the first year of their reign; and three centuries elapsed, after the death of Justinian, before that obsolete dignity, which had been suppressed by custom, could be abolished by law¹⁵⁹. The imperfect mode of distinguishing each year by the name of a magistrate, was usefully supplied by the date of a permanent æra: the creation of the world, according to the septuagint version, was adopted by the Greeks¹⁶⁰; and the Latins, since the age of Charlemagne, have computed their time from the birth of Christ¹⁶¹.

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Conquests of Justinian in the West. — Character and first Campaigns of Belisarius. — He invades and subdues the Vandal Kingdom of Africa. — His Triumph. — The Gothic War. — He recovers Sicily, Naples, and Rome. — Siege of Rome by the Goths. — Their Retreat and Losses. — Surrender of Ravenna. — Glory of Belisarius. — His domestic Shame and Misfortunes.

WHEN Justinian ascended the throne, about fifty years after the fall of the Western empire, the kingdoms of the Goths and Vandals had obtained a solid, and, as it might seem, a legal establishment both in Europe and Africa. The titles which Roman victory had inscribed, were erased with equal justice by the sword of the barbarians; and their successful rapine derived a more venerable sanction from time, from treaties, and from the oaths of fidelity, already repeated by a second or third generation of obedient subjects. Experience and christianity had refuted the superstitious hope, that Rome was founded by the gods to reign for ever over the nations of the earth. But the proud claims of perpetual and indefeasible dominion, which her soldiers could

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no longer maintain, was firmly asserted by her statesmen and lawyers, whose opinions have been sometimes revived and propagated in the modern schools of jurisprudence. After Rome herself had been stripped of the Imperial purple, the princes of Constantinople assumed the sole and sacred sceptre of the monarchy; demanded, as their rightful inheritance, the provinces which had been subdued by the consuls, or possessed by the Cæsars; and feebly aspired to deliver their faithful subjects of the West from the usurpation of heretics and Barbarians. The execution of this splendid design was in some degree reserved for Justinian. During the five first years of his reign, he reluctantly waged a costly and unprofitable war against the Persians; till his pride submitted to his ambition, and he purchased, at the price of four hundred and forty thousand pounds sterling, the benefit of a precarious truce, which, in the language of both nations, was dignified with the appellation of the *endless* peace. The safety of the East enabled the emperor to employ his forces against the Vandals; and the internal state of Africa afforded an honourable motive, and promised a powerful support, to the Roman arms^r.

State of the
Vandals.
Hilderic,
A. D.
523—530

According to the testament of the founder, the African kingdom had lineally descended to Hilderic the eldest of the Vandal princes. A mild disposition inclined the son of a tyrant, the grandson of a conqueror, to prefer the counsels of clemency and peace; and his accession was marked by the salutary edict, which restored two hundred

bishops to their churches, and allowed the free profession of the Athanasian creed². But the Catholics accepted with cold and transient gratitude, a favour so inadequate to their pretensions, and the virtues of Hilderic offended the prejudices of his countrymen. The Arian clergy presumed to insinuate that he had renounced the faith, and the soldiers more loudly complained that he had degenerated from the courage, of his ancestors. His ambassadors were suspected of a secret and disgraceful negociation in the Byzantine court; and his general, the Achilles³, as he was named, of the Vandals, lost a battle against the naked and disorderly Moors. The public discontent was exasperated by Gelimer, whose age, descent, and military fame, gave him an apparent title to the succession: he assumed, with the consent of the nation, the reins of government; and his unfortunate sovereign sunk without a struggle from the throne to a dungeon, where he was strictly guarded with a faithful counsellor, and his unpopular nephew the Achilles of the Vandals. But the indulgence which Hilderic had shewn to his Catholic subjects had powerfully recommended him to the favour of Justinian, who, for the benefit of his own sect, could acknowledge the use and justice of religious toleration: their alliance, while the nephew of Justin remained in a private station, was cemented by the mutual exchange of gifts and letters; and the emperor Justinian asserted the cause of royalty and friendship. In two successive embassies, he admonished the usur-

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Gelimer,
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per to repent of his treason, or to abstain, at least, from any further violence which might provoke the displeasure of God and of the Romans; to reverence the laws of kindred and succession, and to suffer an infirm old man peaceably to end his days, either on the throne of Carthage or in the palace of Constantinople. The passions or even the prudence of Gelimer compelled him to reject these requests, which were urged in the haughty tone of menace and command; and he justified his ambition in a language rarely spoken in the Byzantine court, by alleging the right of a free people to remove or punish their chief magistrate, who had failed in the execution of the kingly office. After this fruitless expostulation, the captive monarch was more rigorously treated, his nephew was deprived of his eyes, and the cruel Vandal, confident in his strength and distance, derided the vain threats and slow preparations of the emperor of the East. Justinian resolved to deliver or revenge his friend, Gelimer to maintain his usurpation: and the war was preceded, according to the practice of civilized nations, by the most solemn protestations, that each party was sincerely desirous of peace.

Debates on
the African
war.

The report of an African war was grateful only to the vain and idle populace of Constantinople, whose poverty exempted them from tribute, and whose cowardice was seldom exposed to military service. But the wiser citizens, who judged of the future by the past, revolved in their memory the immense loss, both of men and money, which

the empire had sustained in the expedition of Basiliscus. The troops, which, after five laborious campaigns, had been recalled from the Persian frontier, dreaded the sea, the climate, and the arms of an unknown enemy. The ministers of the finances computed, as far as they might compute, the demands of an African war; the taxes which must be found and levied to supply those insatiate demands; and the danger, lest their own lives, or at least their lucrative employments, should be made responsible for the deficiency of the supply. Inspired by such selfish motives (for we may not suspect him of any zeal for the public good), John of Cappadocia ventured to oppose in full council the inclinations of his master. He confessed, that a victory of such importance could not be too dearly purchased; but he represented in a grave discourse the certain difficulties and the uncertain event. "You undertake," said the præfect, "to besiege Carthage: by land, the distance is not less than one hundred and forty days journey; on the sea, a whole year must elapse before you can receive any intelligence from your fleet. If Africa should be reduced, it cannot be preserved without the additional conquest of Sicily and Italy. Success will impose the obligation of new labours; a single misfortune will attract the Barbarians into the heart of your exhausted empire". Justinian felt the weight of this salutary advice; he was confounded by the unwonted freedom of an obsequious servant; and the design of the war would

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perhaps have been relinquished, if his courage had not been revived by a voice which silenced the doubts of profane reason. "I have seen a vision," cried an artful or fanatic bishop of the East. "It is the will of heaven, O emperor, that you should not abandon your holy enterprise for the deliverance of the African church. The God of battles will march before your standard, and disperse your enemies, who are the enemies of his Son." The emperor might be tempted, and his counsellors were constrained, to give credit to this seasonable revelation: but they derived more rational hope from the revolt, which the adherents of Hilderic or Athanasius had already excited on the borders of the Vandal monarchy. Pudentius, an African subject, had privately signified his loyal intentions, and a small military aid restored the province of Tripoli to the obedience of the Romans. The government of Sardinia had been intrusted to Godas, a valiant Barbarian: he suspended the payment of tribute, disclaimed his allegiance to the usurper, and gave audience to the emissaries of Justinian, who found him master of that fruitful island, at the head of his guards, and proudly invested with the ensigns of royalty. The forces of the Vandals were diminished by discord and suspicion; the Roman armies were animated by the spirit of Belisarius; one of those heroic names which are familiar to every age and to every nation.

Character
and choice of
Belisarius.

The Africanus of new Rome was born, and perhaps educated, among the Thracian peasants,

without any of those advantages which had formed the virtues of the elder and younger Scipio; a noble origin, liberal studies, and the emulation of a free state. The silence of a loquacious secretary may be admitted, to prove that the youth of Belisarius could not afford any subject of praise: he served, most assuredly with valour and reputation, among the private guards of Justinian; and when his patron became emperor, the domestic was promoted to military command. After a bold inroad into Persarmenia, in which his glory was shared by a colleague, and his progress was checked by an enemy, Belisarius repaired to the important station of Dara, where he first accepted the service of Procopius, the faithful companion, and diligent historian, of his exploits. The Mirranes of Persia advanced, with forty thousand of her best troops, to raze the fortifications of Dara; and signified the day and the hour on which the citizens should prepare a bath for his refreshment after the toils of victory. He encountered an adversary equal to himself, by the new title of General of the East; his superior in the science of war, but much inferior in the number and quality of his troops, which amounted only to twenty-five thousand Romans and strangers, relaxed in their discipline, and humbled by recent disasters. As the level plain of Dara refused all shelter to stratagem and ambush, Belisarius protected his front with a deep trench, which was prolonged at first in perpendicular, and afterwards in paral-

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His services
in the Persian
war,
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lel, lines, to cover the wings of cavalry advantageously posted to command the flanks and rear of the enemy. When the Roman centre was shaken, their well-timed and rapid charge decided the conflict: the standard of Persia fell; the *immortals* fled; the infantry threw away their bucklers, and eight thousand of the vanquished were left on the field of battle. In the next campaign, Syria was invaded on the side of the desert; and Belisarius, with twenty thousand men, hastened from Dara to the relief of the province. During the whole summer, the designs of the enemy were baffled by his skilful dispositions: he pressed their retreat, occupied each night their camp of the preceding day, and would have secured a bloodless victory, if he could have resisted the impatience of his own troops. Their valiant promise was faintly supported in the hour of battle; the right wing was exposed by the treacherous or cowardly desertion of the Christian Arabs; the Huns, a veteran band of eight hundred warriors, were oppressed by superior numbers; the flight of the Isaurians was intercepted; but the Roman infantry stood firm on the left; for Belisarius himself, dismounting from his horse, shewed them that intrepid despair was their only safety. They turned their backs to the Euphrates, and their faces to the enemy: innumerable arrows glanced without effect from the compact and shelving order of their bucklers; an impenetrable line of pikes was opposed to the repeated assault of the Persian cavalry; and

after a resistance of many hours, the remaining troops were skilfully embarked under the shadow of the night. The Persian commander retired with disorder and disgrace, to answer a strict account of the lives of so many soldiers which he had consumed in a barren victory. But the fame of Belisarius was not sullied by a defeat, in which he alone had saved his army from the consequences of their own rashness: the approach of peace relieved him from the guard of the eastern frontier, and his conduct in the sedition of Constantinople amply discharged his obligations to the emperor. When the African war became the topic of popular discourse and secret deliberation, each of the Roman generals was apprehensive, rather than ambitious, of the dangerous honour; but as soon as Justinian had declared his preference of superior merit, their envy was rekindled by the unanimous applause which was given to the choice of Belisarius. The temper of the Byzantine court may encourage a suspicion, that the hero was darkly assisted by the intrigues of his wife, the fair and subtle Antonina, who alternately enjoyed the confidence and incurred the hatred of the empress Theodora. The birth of Antonina was ignoble, she descended from a family of charioteers; and her chastity has been stained with the foulest reproach. Yet she reigned with long and absolute power over the mind of her illustrious husband; and if Antonina disdained the merit of conjugal fidelity, she expressed a manly friendship to Belisarius,

C H A P. whom she accompanied with undaunted resolution in all the hardships and dangers of a military life.⁷
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Preparations
 for the African war,
 A. D. 533.

The preparations for the African war were not unworthy of the last contest between Rome and Carthage. The pride and flower of the army consisted of the guards of Belisarius, who, according to the pernicious indulgence of the times, devoted themselves by a particular oath of fidelity to the service of their patron. Their strength and stature, for which they had been curiously selected, the goodness of their horses and armour, and the assiduous practice of all the exercises of war, enabled them to act whatever their courage might prompt; and their courage was exalted by the social honour of their rank, and the personal ambition of favour and fortune. Four hundred of the bravest of the Heruli marched under the banner of the faithful and active Pharas; their untractable valour was more highly prized than the tame submission of the Greeks and Syrians; and of such importance was it deemed to procure a reinforcement of six hundred Massagetæ, or Huns, that they were allured by fraud and deceit to engage in a naval expedition. Five thousand horse and ten thousand foot were embarked at Constantinople for the conquest of Africa, but the infantry, for the most part levied in Thrace and Isauria, yielded to the more prevailing use and reputation of the cavalry; and the Scythian bow was the weapon on which the armies of Rome were now

reduced to place their principal dependence. From a laudable desire to assert the dignity of his theme, Procopius defends the soldiers of his own time against the morose critics, who confined that respectable name to the heavy-armed warriors of antiquity, and maliciously observed, that the word *archer* is introduced by Homer^s as a term of contempt. “Such contempt might perhaps be due to the naked youths who appeared on foot in the fields of Troy, and, lurking behind a tombstone, or the shield of a friend, drew the bow-string to their breast”, and dismissed a feeble and lifeless arrow. But our archers (pursues the historian) are mounted on horses, which they manage with admirable skill; their head and shoulders are protected by a cask or buckler; they wear greaves of iron on their legs, and their bodies are guarded by a coat of mail. On their right side hangs a quiver, a sword on their left, and their hand is accustomed to wield a lance or javelin in closer combat. Their bows are strong and weighty; they shoot in every possible direction, advancing, retreating, to the front, to the rear, or to either flank; and as they are taught to draw the bow-string not to the breast, but to the right ear, firm indeed must be the armour that can resist the rapid violence of their shaft”. Five hundred transports, navigated by twenty thousand mariners of Egypt, Cilicia, and Ionia, were collected in the harbour of Constantinople. The smallest of these vessels may be

C H A P. computed at thirty, the largest at five hundred,
 XLI. tons; and the fair average will supply an allowance, liberal, but not profuse, of about one hundred thousand tons¹⁰, for the reception of thirty-five thousand soldiers and sailors, of five thousand horses, of arms, engines, and military stores, and of a sufficient stock of water and provisions for a voyage, perhaps, of three months. The proud gallies, which in former ages swept the Mediterranean with so many hundred oars, had long since disappeared; and the fleet of Justinian was escorted only by ninety-two light brigantines, covered from the missile weapons of the enemy, and rowed by two thousand of the brave and robust youth of Constantinople. Twenty-two generals are named, most of whom were afterwards distinguished in the wars of Africa and Italy: but the supreme command, both by land and sea was delegated to Belisarius alone, with a boundless power of acting according to his discretion as if the emperor himself were present. The separation of the naval and military professions is at once the effect and the cause of the modern improvements in the science of navigation and maritime war.

Departure of
 the fleet,
 A. D. 533,
 June.

In the seventh year of the reign of Justinian, and about the time of the summer solstice, the whole fleet of six hundred ships was ranged in martial pomp before the gardens of the palace. The patriarch pronounced his benediction, the emperor signified his last commands, the general's trumpet gave the signal of departure, and every

heart, according to its fears or wishes, explored with anxious curiosity the omens of misfortune and success. The first halt was made at Perinthus or Heraclea, where Belisarius waited five days to receive some Thracian horses, a military gift of his sovereign. From thence the fleet pursued their course through the midst of the Propontis; but as they struggled to pass the straits of the Hellespont, an unfavourable wind detained them four days at Abydus, where the general exhibited a memorable lesson of firmness and severity. Two of the Huns, who in a drunken quarrel had slain one of their fellow-soldiers, were instantly shewn to the army suspended on a lofty gibbet. The national indignity was resented by their countrymen, who disclaimed the servile laws of the empire, and asserted the free privilege of Scythia, where a small fine was allowed to expiate the hasty fallies of intemperance and anger. Their complaints were specious, their clamours were loud, and the Romans were not averse to the example of disorder and impunity. But the rising sedition was appeased by the authority and eloquence of the general: and he represented to the assembled troops the obligation of justice, the importance of discipline, the rewards of piety and virtue, and the unpardonable guilt of murder, which, in his apprehension, was aggravated rather than excused by the vice of intoxication¹¹. In the navigation from the Hellespont to Peloponnesus, which the Greeks, after the siege of Troy, had performed in four days¹²; the fleet of Belisarius

CHAP. was guided in their course by his master-galley,
 XLI. conspicuous in the day by the redness of the
 sails, and in the night by the torches blazing
 from the mast-head. It was the duty of the
 pilots, as they steered between the islands, and
 turned the capes of Malea and Tænarium, to
 preserve the just order and regular intervals of
 such a multitude of ships; as the wind was fair
 and moderate, their labours were not unsuccessful,
 and the troops were safely disembarked at
 Methone on the Messenian coast, to repose them-
 selves for a while after the fatigues of the sea.
 In this place they experienced how avarice, in-
 vested with authority, may sport with the lives
 of thousands which are bravely exposed for the
 public service. According to military practice,
 the bread or biscuit of the Romans was twice
 prepared in the oven, and a diminution of one-
 fourth was cheerfully allowed for the loss of
 weight. To gain this miserable profit, and to
 save the expence of wood, the præfect John of
 Cappadocia had given orders, that the flour
 should be slightly baked by the same fire which
 warmed the baths of Constantinople; and when
 the sacks were opened, a soft and mouldy paste
 was distributed to the army. Such unwholesome
 food, assisted by the heat of the climate and sea-
 son, soon produced an epidemical disease,
 which swept away five hundred soldiers. Their
 health was restored by the diligence of Belisarius,
 who provided fresh bread at Methone, and bold-
 ly expressed his just and humane indignation:

the emperor heard his complaint: the general was praised; but the minister was not punished. From the port of Methone, the pilots steered along the western coast of Peloponnesus, as far as the isle of Zacynthus or Zant, before they undertook the voyage (in their eyes a most arduous voyage) of one hundred leagues over the Ionian sea. As the fleet was surprised by a calm, sixteen days were consumed in the slow navigation; and even the general would have suffered the intolerable hardship of thirst, if the ingenuity of Antonina had not preserved the water in glass-bottles, which she buried deep in the sand in a part of the ship impervious to the rays of the sun. At length the harbour of Caucana¹³, on the southern side of Sicily, afforded a secure and hospitable shelter. The Gothic officers who governed the island in the name of the daughter and grandson of Theodoric, obeyed their imprudent orders, to receive the troops of Justinia like friends and allies: provisions were liberally supplied, the cavalry was remounted¹⁴, and Procopius soon returned from Syracuse with correct information of the state and designs of the Vandals. His intelligence determined Belisarius to hasten his operations, and his wise impatience was seconded by the winds. The fleet lost sight of Sicily, passed before the isle of Malta, discovered the capes of Africa, ran along the coast with a strong gale from the north-east, and finally cast anchor at the promontory of Caput vada, about five days journey to the south of Carthage¹⁵.

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XL. I.

Belisarius
lands on the
coast of Afri-
ca—Septem-
ber.

If Gelimer had been informed of the approach of the enemy, he must have delayed the conquest of Sardinia for the immediate defence of his person and kingdom. A detachment of five thousand soldiers, and one hundred and twenty galleys, would have joined the remaining forces of the Vandals; and the descendant of Genferic might have surprised and oppressed a fleet of deep-laden transports incapable of action, and of light brigantines that seem only qualified for flight. Belisarius had secretly trembled when he overheard his soldiers, in the passage, emboldening each other to confess their apprehensions: if they were once on shore, they hoped to maintain the honour of their arms; but if they should be attacked at sea, they did not blush to acknowledge that they wanted courage to contend at the same time with the winds, the waves, and the Barbarians¹⁶. The knowledge of their sentiments decided Belisarius to seize the first opportunity of landing them on the coast of Africa; and he prudently rejected, in a council of war, the proposal of sailing with the fleet and army into the port of Carthage. Three months after their departure from Constantinople, the men and horses, the arms and military stores, were safely disembarked, and five soldiers were left as a guard on board each of the ships, which were disposed in the form of a semicircle. The remainder of the troops occupied a camp on the sea-shore, which they fortified, according to ancient discipline, with a ditch and rampart; and the discovery of a source of fresh water, while

while it allayed the thirst, excited the superstitious confidence, of the Romans. The next morning, some of the neighbouring gardens were pillaged; and Belisarius, after chastising the offenders, embraced the slight occasion, but the decisive moment, of inculcating the maxims of justice, moderation, and genuine policy. “When I first accepted the
 “ commission of subduing Africa, I depended
 “ much less,” said the general, “on the numbers,
 “ or even the bravery, of my troops, than upon
 “ the friendly disposition of the natives, and
 “ their immortal hatred to the Vandals. You
 “ alone can deprive me of this hope: if you
 “ continue to extort by rapine what might be
 “ purchased for a little money, such acts of
 “ violence will reconcile these implacable ene-
 “ mies, and unite them in a just and holy league
 “ against the invaders of their country.” These exhortations were enforced by a rigid discipline; of which the soldiers themselves soon felt and praised the salutary effects. The inhabitants, instead of deserting their houses, or hiding their corn, supplied the Romans with a fair and liberal market: the civil officers of the province continued to exercise their functions in the name of Justinian; and the clergy, from motives of conscience and interest assiduously laboured to promote the cause of a Catholic emperor. The small town of Sullecte¹⁷, one day’s journey from the camp, had the honour of being foremost to open her gates, and to resume her ancient allegiance:

C H A P. the larger cities of Leptis and Adrumetum imitated the example of loyalty as soon as Belisarius appeared; and he advanced without opposition as far as Grasse, a palace of the Vandal kings, at the distance of fifty miles from Carthage. The weary Romans indulged themselves in the refreshment of shady groves, cool fountains, and delicious fruits; and the preference which Procopius allows to these gardens over any that he had seen, either in the East or West, may be ascribed either to the taste or the fatigue of the historian. In three generations, prosperity and a warm climate had dissolved the hardy virtue of the Vandals, who insensibly became the most luxurious of mankind. In their villas and gardens, which might deserve the Persian name of *paradise*¹⁸, they enjoyed a cool and elegant repose; and, after the daily use of the bath, the Barbarians were seated at a table profusely spread with the delicacies of the land and sea. Their silken robes, loosely flowing after the fashion of the Medes, were embroidered with gold: love and hunting were the labours of their life, and their vacant hours were amused by pantomimes, chariot-races, and the music and dances of the theatre.

Defeats the
Vandals in a
first battle.

In a march of ten or twelve days, the vigilance of Belisarius was constantly awake and active against his unseen enemies, by whom in every place, and at every hour, he might be suddenly attacked. An officer of confidence and merit, John the Armenian, led the vanguard of three hundred horse; six hundred

Massagetæ covered at a certain distance the left flank; and the whole fleet, steering along the coast, seldom lost sight of the army, which moved each day about twelve miles, and lodged in the evening in strong camps, or in friendly towns. The near approach of the Romans to Carthage filled the mind of Gelimer with anxiety and terror. He prudently wished to protract the war till his brother, with his veteran troops, should return from the conquests of Sardinia; and he now lamented the rash policy of his ancestors, who, by destroying the fortifications of Africa, had left him only the dangerous resource of risking a battle in the neighbourhood of his capital. The Vandal conquerors, from their original number of fifty thousand, were multiplied, without including their women and children, to one hundred and sixty thousand fighting men: and such forces, animated with valour and union, might have crushed, at their first landing, the feeble and exhausted bands of the Roman general. But the friends of the captive king were more inclined to accept the invitations, than to resist the progress, of Belisarius; and many a proud Barbarian disguised his aversion to war under the more specious name of his hatred to the usurper. Yet the authority and promises of Gelimer collected a formidable army, and his plans were concerted with some degree of military skill. An order was dispatched to his brother Ammatas, to collect all the forces of Carthage, and to encounter the van of the Roman

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army at the distance of ten miles from the city: his nephew Gibamund, with two thousand horse, was destined to attack their left, when the monarch himself, who silently followed, should charge their rear, in a situation which excluded them from the aid or even the view of their fleet. But the rashness of Ammatas was fatal to himself and his country. He anticipated the hour of the attack, outstripped his tardy followers, and was pierced with a mortal wound, after he had slain with his own hand twelve of his boldest antagonists. His Vandals fled to Carthage; the highway, almost ten miles, was strewed with dead bodies; and it seemed incredible that such multitudes could be slaughtered by the swords of three hundred Romans. The nephew of Gelimer was defeated after a slight combat by the six hundred Massagetæ: they did not equal the third part of his numbers; but each Scythian was fired by the example of his chief, who gloriously exercised the privilege of his family, by riding foremost and alone to shoot the first arrow against the enemy. In the mean while, Gelimer himself, ignorant of the event, and misguided by the windings of the hills, inadvertently passed the Roman army, and reached the scene of action where Ammatas had fallen. He wept the fate of his brother and of Carthage, charged with irresistible fury, the advancing squadrons, and might have pursued, and perhaps decided the victory, if he had not wasted those inestimable moments in the discharge of a vain, though pious, duty

to the dead. While his spirit was broken by this mournful office, he heard the trumpet of Belisarius, who, leaving Antonina and his infantry in the camp, pressed forwards with his guards and the remainder of the cavalry to rally his flying troops, and to restore the fortune of the day. Much room could not be found in this disorderly battle for the talents of a general: but the king fled before the hero; and the Vandals, accustomed only to a Moorish enemy, were incapable of withstanding the arms and discipline of the Romans. Gelimer retired with hasty steps towards the desert of Numidia; but he had soon the consolation of learning that his private orders for the execution of Hilderic and his captive friends had been faithfully obeyed. The tyrant's revenge was useful only to his enemies. The death of a lawful prince excited the compassion of his people; his life might have perplexed the victorious Romans; and the lieutenant of Justinian, by a crime of which he was innocent, was relieved from the painful alternative of forfeiting his honour or relinquishing his conquests.

As soon as the tumult had subsided, the several parts of the army informed each other of the accidents of the day; and Belisarius pitched his camp on the field of victory, to which the tenth milestone from Carthage had applied the Latin appellation of *decimus*. From a wise suspicion of the stratagems and resources of the Vandals, he marched the next day in order of battle, halted in the evening before the gates of Carthage,

Reduction of
Carthage,
A. D. 533,
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and allowed a night of repose, that he might not, in darkness and disorder, expose the city to the licence of the soldiers, or the soldiers themselves to the secret ambush of the city. But as the fears of Belisarius were the result of calm and intrepid reason, he was soon satisfied that he might confide, without danger, in the peaceful and friendly aspect of the capital. Carthage blazed with innumerable torches, the signals of the public joy; the chain was removed that guarded the entrance of the port; the gates were thrown open, and the people, with acclamations of gratitude, hailed and invited their Roman deliverers. The defeat of the Vandals, and the freedom of Africa, were announced to the city on the eve of St. Cyprian, when the churches were already adorned and illuminated for the festival of the martyr, whom three centuries of superstition had almost raised to a local deity. The Arians, conscious that their reign had expired, resigned the temple to the Catholics, who rescued their saint from profane hands, performed the holy rites, and loudly proclaimed the creed of Athanasius and Justinian. One awful hour reversed the fortunes of the contending parties. The suppliant Vandals, who had so lately indulged the vices of conquerors, sought an humble refuge in the sanctuary of the church; while the merchants of the East were delivered from the deepest dungeon of the palace by their affrighted keeper, who implored the protection of his captives, and shewed them through an aperture in

the wall, the sails of the Roman fleet. After their separation from the army, the naval commanders had proceeded with slow caution along the coast, till they reached the Hermæan promontory, and obtained the first intelligence of the victory of Belisarius. Faithful to his instructions, they would have cast anchor about twenty miles from Carthage, if the more skilful seamen had not represented the perils of the shore, and the signs of an impending tempest. Still ignorant of the revolution, they declined, however, the rash attempt of forcing the chain of the port; and the adjacent harbour and suburb of Mendoracium were insulted only by the rapine of a private officer who disobeyed and deserted his leaders. But the Imperial fleet, advancing with a fair wind, steered through the narrow entrance of the Goletta; and occupied in the deep and capacious lake of Tunis a secure station about five miles from the capital¹⁹. No sooner was Belisarius informed of their arrival, than he dispatched orders, that the greatest part of the mariners should be immediately landed to join the triumph, and to swell the apparent numbers of the Romans. Before he allowed them to enter the gates of Carthage, he exhorted them, in a discourse worthy of himself and the occasion, not to disgrace the glory of their arms; and to remember that the Vandals had been the tyrants, but that *they* were the deliverers of the Africans; who must now be respected as the voluntary and affectionate subjects of their common sovereign.

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The Romans marched through the streets in close ranks, prepared for battle if an enemy had appeared; the strict order maintained by the general imprinted on their minds the duty of obedience; and in an age in which custom and impunity almost sanctified the abuse of conquest, the genius of one man repressed the passions of a victorious army. The voice of menace and complaint was silent; the trade of Carthage was not interrupted; while Africa changed her master and her government, the shops continued open and busy; and the soldiers, after sufficient guards had been posted, modestly departed to the houses which were allotted for their reception. Belisarius fixed his residence in the palace; seated himself on the throne of Genferic; accepted and distributed the Barbaric spoil; granted their lives to the suppliant Vandals; and laboured to repair the damage which the suburb of Mandracium had sustained in the preceding night. At supper he entertained his principal officers with the form and magnificence of a royal banquet²⁰. The victor was respectfully served by the captive officers of the household; and in the moments of festivity, when the impartial spectators applauded the fortune and merit of Belisarius, his envious flatterers secretly shed their venom on every word and gesture which might alarm the suspicions of a jealous monarch. One day was given to these pompous scenes, which may not be despised as useless if they attracted the popular veneration; but the active mind of Belisarius, which in the

pride of victory could suppose a defeat, had already resolved, that the Roman empire in Africa should not depend on the chance of arms, or the favour of the people. The fortifications of Carthage had alone been exempted from the general proscription; but in the reign of ninety-five years they were suffered to decay by the thoughtless and indolent Vandals. A wiser conqueror restored with incredible dispatch the walls and ditches of the city. His liberality encouraged the workmen; the soldiers, the mariners, and the citizens, vied with each other in the salutary labour; and Gelimer, who had feared to trust his person in an open town, beheld with astonishment and despair the rising strength of an impregnable fortress.

That unfortunate monarch, after the loss of his capital, applied himself to collect the remains of an army scattered, rather than destroyed, by the preceding battle; and the hopes of pillage attracted some Moorish bands to the standard of Gelimer. He encamped in the fields of Bulla, four days journey from Carthage; insulted the capital, which he deprived of the use of an aqueduct; proposed an high reward for the head of every Roman; affected to spare the persons and property of his African subjects, and secretly negotiated with the Arian sectaries and the confederate Huns. Under these circumstances, the conquest of Sardinia served only to aggravate his distress: he reflected with the deepest anguish, that he had wasted, in that useless enterprise, five thousand of his bravest troops; and he read, with

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Final defeat
of Gelimer
and the
Vandals,
A. D. 533,
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grief and shame, the victorious letters of his brother Zano, who expressed a sanguine confidence that the king, after the example of their ancestors, had already chastised the rashness of the Roman invader. "Alas! my brother," replied Gelimer, "Heaven has declared against our unhappy nation. While you have subdued Sardinia, we have lost Africa. No sooner did Belisarius appear with a handful of soldiers, than courage and prosperity deserted the cause of the Vandals. Your nephew Gibamund, your brother Ammatas, have been betrayed to death by the cowardice of their followers. Our horses, our ships, Carthage itself, and all Africa, are in the power of the enemy. Yet the Vandals still prefer an ignominious repose, at the expence of their wives and children, their wealth and liberty. Nothing now remains, except the field of Bulla, and the hope of your valour. Abandon Sardinia; fly to our relief; restore our empire, or perish by our side." On the receipt of this epistle, Zano imparted his grief to the principal Vandals; but the intelligence was prudently concealed from the natives of the island. The troops embarked in one hundred and twenty galleys at the port of Cagliari, cast anchor the third day on the confines of Mauritania, and hastily pursued their march to join the royal standard in the camp of Bulla. Mournful was the interview: the two brothers embraced; they wept in silence; no questions were asked of the Sardinian victory; no enquiries were made of the African misfortu-

nes: they saw before their eyes the whole extent of their calamities; and the absence of their wives and children afforded a melancholy proof, that either death or captivity had been their lot. The languid spirit of the Vandals was at length awakened and united by the entreaties of their king, the example of Zano, and the instant danger which threatened their monarchy and religion. The military strength of the nation advanced to battle; and such was the rapid increase, that before their army reached Tricameron, about twenty miles from Carthage, they might boast, perhaps with some exaggeration, that they surpassed, in a tenfold proportion, the diminutive powers of the Romans. But these powers were under the command of Belisarius; and, as he was conscious of their superior merit, he permitted the Barbarians to surprise him at an unseasonable hour. The Romans were instantly under arms: a rivulet covered their front; the cavalry formed the first line, which Belisarius supported in the center, at the head of five hundred guards; the infantry, at some distance, was posted in the second line; and the vigilance of the general watched the separate station and ambiguous faith of the Massagetæ, who secretly reserved their aid for the conquerors. The historian has inserted, and the reader may easily supply, the speeches²¹ of the commanders, who, by arguments the most apposite to their situation, inculcated the importance of victory and the contempt of life. Zano, with the troops which had followed him to the

C H A P. XLII. conquest of Sardinia, was placed in the center; and the throne of Genferic might have stood, if the multitude of Vandals had imitated their intrepid resolution. Casting away their lances and missile weapons, they drew their swords, and expected the charge: the Roman cavalry thrice passed the rivulet; they were thrice repulsed; and the conflict was firmly maintained, till Zano fell, and the standard of Belisarius was displayed. Gelimér retreated to his camp; the Huns joined the pursuit; and the victors despoiled the bodies of the slain. Yet no more than fifty Romans, and eight hundred Vandals, were found on the field of battle; so inconsiderable was the carnage of a day, which extinguished a nation, and transferred the empire of Africa. In the evening, Belisarius led his infantry to the attack of the camp; and the pusillanimous flight of Gelimér exposed the vanity of his recent declarations, that, to the vanquished, death was a relief, life a burthen, and infamy the only object of terror. His departure was secret; but as soon as the Vandals discovered that their king had deserted them, they hastily dispersed, anxious only for their personal safety, and careless of every object that is dear or valuable to mankind. The Romans entered the camp without resistance; and the wildest scenes of disorder were veiled in the darkness and confusion of the night. Every Barbarian who met their swords was inhumanly massacred; their widows and daughters, as rich heirs, or beautiful concubines, were embraced by the

licentious soldiers; and avarice itself was almost fatiated with the treasures of gold and silver, the accumulated fruits of conquest or œconomy in a long period of prosperity and peace. In this frantic search, the troops even of Belisarius forgot their caution and respect. Intoxicated with lust and rapine, they explored in small parties, or alone, the adjacent fields, the woods, the rocks, and the caverns, that might possibly conceal any desirable prize: laden with booty, they deserted their ranks, and wandered, without a guide, on the high-road to Carthage; and if the flying enemies had dared to return, very few of the conquerors would have escaped. Deeply sensible of the disgrace and danger, Belisarius passed an apprehensive night on the field of victory; at the dawn of day, he planted his standard on a hill, recalled his guards and veterans, and gradually restored the modesty and obedience of the camp. It was equally the concern of the Roman general to subdue the hostile, and to save the prostrate Barbarian: and the suppliant Vandals, who could be found only in churches, were protected by his authority, disarmed, and separately confined, that they might neither disturb the public peace, nor become the victims of popular revenge. After dispatching a light detachment to tread the footsteps of Gelimer, he advanced with his whole army, about ten days march, as far as Hippo Regius, which no longer possessed the relics of St. Augustin²². The season, and the certain intelligence that the Vandal had fled to the inac-

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cessible country of the Moors, determined Belisarius to relinquish the vain pursuit, and to fix his winter-quarters at Carthage. From thence he dispatched his principal lieutenant, to inform the emperor, that, in the space of three months, he had atchieved the conquest of Africa.

Conquest of
Africa by
Belisarius, 1
A. D. 534.

Belisarius spoke the language of truth. The surviving Vandals yielded, without resistance, their arms and their freedom: the neighbourhood of Carthage submitted to his presence; and the more distant provinces were successively subdued by the report of his victory. Tripoli was confirmed in her voluntary allegiance; Sardinia and Corsica surrendered to an officer, who carried, instead of a sword, the head of the valiant Zano; and the isles of Majorca, Minorca, and Yvica, consented to remain an humble appendage of the African kingdom. Cæsarea, a royal city, which in looser geography may be confounded with the modern Algiers, was situate thirty days march to the westward of Carthage: by land, the road was infested by the Moors; but the sea was open, and the Romans were now masters of the sea. An active and discreet tribune sailed as far as the Streights, where he occupied Septem or Ceuta²³, which rises opposite to Gibraltar on the African coast: that remote place was afterwards adorned and fortified by Justinian; and he seems to have indulged the vain ambition of extending his empire to the columns of Hercules. He received the messengers of victory at the time when he was preparing to publish the pandects of the Roman

law; and the devout or jealous emperor celebrated the divine goodness, and confessed, in silence, the merit of his successful general²⁴. Impatient to abolish the temporal and spiritual tyranny of the Vandals, he proceeded, without delay, to the full establishment of the Catholic church. Her jurisdiction, wealth, and immunities, perhaps the most essential part of episcopal religion, were restored and amplified with a liberal hand; the Arian worship was suppressed; the Donatist meetings were proscribed²⁵; and the synod of Carthage, by the voice of two hundred and seventeen bishops²⁶, applauded the just measure of pious retaliation. On such an occasion, it may not be presumed, that many orthodox prelates were absent; but the comparative smallness of their number, which in ancient councils had been twice or even thrice multiplied, most clearly indicates the decay both of the church and state. While Justinian approved himself the defender of the faith, he entertained an ambitious hope, that his victorious lieutenant would speedily enlarge the narrow limits of his dominion to the space which they occupied before the invasion of the Moors and Vandals; and Belisarius was instructed to establish five *dukes* or commanders in the convenient stations of Tripoli, Leptis, Cirta, Cæsarea, and Sardinia, and to compute the military force of *palatines* or *borderers* that might be sufficient for the defence of Africa. The kingdom of the Vandals was not unworthy of the presence of a Prætorian præfect; and four consulars, three presidents, were appoint-

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ed to administer the seven provinces under his civil jurisdiction. The number of their subordinate officers, clerks, messengers, or assistants, was minutely expressed; three hundred and ninety-six for the præfect himself, fifty for each of his vicegerents; and the rigid definition of their fees and salaries was more effectual to confirm the right, than to prevent the abuse. These magistrates might be oppressive, but they were not idle: and the subtle questions of justice and revenue were infinitely propagated under the new government, which professed to revive the freedom and equity of the Roman republic. The conqueror was solicitous to extract a prompt and plentiful supply from his African subjects; and he allowed them to claim, even in the third degree, and from the collateral line, the houses and lands of which their families had been unjustly despoiled by the Vandals. After the departure of Belisarius, who acted by an high and special commission, no ordinary provision was made for a master-general of the forces: but the office of Prætorian præfect was intrusted to a soldier; the civil and military powers were united, according to the practice of Justinian, in the chief governor; and the representative of the emperor in Africa as well as in Italy, was soon distinguished by the appellation of Exarch²⁷.

Distress and
captivity of
Gelimer,
A. D. 534—
the Spring.

Yet the conquest of Africa was imperfect; till her former sovereign was delivered, either alive or dead, into the hands of the Romans. Doubtful of the event, Gelimer had given secret orders that

that a part of his treasure should be transported to Spain, where he hoped to find a secure refuge at the court of the king of the Visigoths. But these intentions were disappointed by accident, treachery, and the indefatigable pursuit of his enemies, who intercepted his flight from the sea-shore, and chased the unfortunate monarch, with some faithful followers, to the inaccessible mountain of Papua²⁸, in the inland country of Numidia. He was immediately besieged by Pharas, an officer whose truth and sobriety were the more applauded, as such qualities could be seldom found among the Heruli, the most corrupt of the Barbarian tribes. To his vigilance Belisarius had entrusted this important charge; and, after a bold attempt to scale the mountain, in which he lost an hundred and ten soldiers, Pharas expected, during a winter siege, the operation of distress and famine on the mind of the Vandal king. From the softest habits of pleasure, from the unbounded command of industry and wealth, he was reduced to share the poverty of the Moors²⁹, supportable only to themselves by their ignorance of a happier condition. In their rude hovels, of mud and hurdles, which confined the smoke and excluded the light, they promiscuously slept on the ground, perhaps on a sheep-skin, with their wives, their children, and their cattle. Sordid and scanty were their garments; the use of bread and wine was unknown; and their oaten or barley cakes, imperfectly baked in the ashes, were devoured almost in a crude state by the hungry savages.

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The health of Gelimer must have sunk under these strange and unwonted hardships, from whatever cause they had been endured; but his actual misery was embittered by the recollection of past greatness, the daily insolence of his protectors, and the just apprehension, that the light and venal Moors might be tempted to betray the rights of hospitality. The knowledge of his situation dictated the humane and friendly epistle of Pharas. "Like yourself," said the chief of the Heruli, "I am an illiterate Barbarian, but I speak the language of plain sense, and an honest heart. Why will you persist in hopeless obstinacy? Why will you ruin yourself, your family, and nation? The love of freedom and abhorrence of slavery? Alas! my dearest Gelimer, are you not already the worst of slaves, the slave of the vile nation of the Moors? Would it not be preferable to sustain at Constantinople a life of poverty and servitude, rather than to reign the undoubted monarch of the mountain of Papua? Do you think it a disgrace to be the subject of Justinian? Belisarius is his subject; and we ourselves, whose birth is not inferior to your own, are not ashamed of our obedience to the Roman emperor. That generous prince will grant you a rich inheritance of lands, a place in the senate, and the dignity of Patrician: such are his gracious intentions, and you may depend with full assurance on the word of Belisarius. So long as heaven has condemned us to suffer, patience is a virtue; but

“ if we reject the proffered deliverance, it degene-
 “ rates into blind and stupid despair. ” “ I am
 “ not insensible, ” replied the king of the Van-
 dals, ” how kind and rational is your advice.
 “ But I cannot persuade myself to become the
 “ slave of an unjust enemy, who has deserved
 “ my implacable hatred. *Him* I had never injured
 “ either by word or deed: yet he has sent against
 “ me, I know not from whence, a certain Belifa-
 “ rius, who has cast me headlong from the
 “ throne into this abyfs of misery. Justinian is a
 “ man; he is a prince; does he not dread for
 “ himself a similar reverse of fortune? I can
 “ write no more: my grief oppresses me. Send
 “ me, I beseech you, my dear Pharas, send me,
 “ a lyre ”, a sponge, and a loaf of bread. ”

From the Vandal messenger, Pharas was inform-
 ed of the motives of this singular request. It
 was long since the king of Africa had tasted bread;
 a defluxion had fallen on his eyes, the effect of
 fatigue or incessant weeping; and he wished to
 solace the melancholy hours, by singing to the
 lyre the sad story of his own misfortunes. The
 humanity of Pharas was moved; he sent the three
 extraordinary gifts; but even his humanity prompt-
 ed him to redouble the vigilance of his guard,
 that he might sooner compel his prisoner to em-
 brace a resolution advantageous to the Romans,
 but salutary to himself. The obstinacy of Geli-
 mer at length yielded to reason and necessity;
 the solemn assurances of safety and honourable
 treatment were ratified in the emperor's name,

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by the ambassador of Belisarius; and the king of the Vandals descended from the mountain. The first public interview was in one of the suburbs of Carthage; and when the royal captive accosted his conqueror, he burst into a fit of laughter. The crowd might naturally believe, that extreme grief had deprived Gelimer of his senses; but in this mournful state, unseasonable mirth insinuated to more intelligent observers, that the vain and transitory scenes of human greatness are unworthy of a serious thought³¹.

Return and
triumph of
Belisarius,
A. D. 534.
Autumn.

Their contempt was soon justified by a new example of a vulgar truth; that flattery adheres to power, and envy to superior merit. The chiefs of the Roman army presumed to think themselves the rivals of an hero. Their private dispatches maliciously affirmed, that the conqueror of Africa, strong in his reputation and the public love, conspired to seat himself on the throne of the Vandals. Justinian listened with too patient an ear; and his silence was the result of jealousy rather than of confidence. An honourable alternative, of remaining in the province, or of returning to the capital, was indeed submitted to the discretion of Belisarius; but he wisely concluded from intercepted letters, and the knowledge of his sovereign's temper, that he must either resign his head, erect his standard, or confound his enemies by his presence and submission. Innocence and courage decided his choice: his guards, captives, and treasures, were diligently embarked; and so prosperous was the navigation, that his arrival at Constantinople preceded any

certain account of his departure from the port of Carthage. Such unsuspecting loyalty removed the apprehensions of Justinian: envy was silenced and inflamed by the public gratitude; and the third Africanus obtained the honours of a triumph, a ceremony which the city of Constantine had never seen, and which ancient Rome, since the reign of Tiberius, had reserved for the *auspicious* arms of the Cæsars³². From the palace of Belisarius, the procession was conducted through the principal streets to the hippodrome; and this memorable day seemed to avenge the injuries of Genferic, and to expiate the shame of the Romans. The wealth of nations was displayed, the trophies of martial or effeminate luxury: rich armour, golden thrones, and the chariots of state which had been used by the Vandal queen; the massy furniture of the royal banquet, the splendour of precious stones, the elegant forms of statues and vases, the more substantial treasure of gold, and the holy vessels of the Jewish temple, which, after their long peregrination, were respectfully deposited in the Christian church of Jerusalem. A long train of the noblest Vandals reluctantly exposed their lofty stature and manly countenance. Gelimer slowly advanced: he was clad in a purple robe, and still maintained the majesty of a king. Not a tear escaped from his eyes, not a sigh was heard; but his pride or piety derived some secret consolation from the words of Solomon³³, which he repeatedly pronounced VANITY! VANITY! ALL IS VANITY! Instead of ascending a triumphal car drawn

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by four horses or elephants, the modest conqueror marched on foot at the head of his brave companions: his prudence might decline an honour too conspicuous for a subject; and his magnanimity might justly disdain what had been so often sullied by the vilest of tyrants. The glorious procession entered the gate of the hippodrome; was saluted by the acclamations of the senate and people; and halted before the throne where Justinian and Theodora were seated to receive the homage of the captive monarch and the victorious hero. They both performed the customary adoration; and falling prostrate on the ground, respectfully touched the footstool of a prince who had not unsheathed his sword, and of a prostitute, who had danced on the theatre: some gentle violence was used to bend the stubborn spirit of the grandson of Genseric; and however trained to servitude, the genius of Belisarius must have secretly rebelled. He was immediately declared consul for the ensuing year, and the day of his inauguration resembled the pomp of a second triumph: his curule chair was borne aloft on the shoulders of captive Vandals; and the spoils of war, gold cups, and rich girdles, were profusely scattered among the populace.

His sole
consulship,
A. D. 535,
January 1.

End of Geli-
mer and the
Vandals.

But the purest reward of Belisarius was in the faithful execution of a treaty for which his honour had been pledged to the king of the Vandals. The religious scruples of Gelimer, who adhered to the Arian heresy, were incompatible with the dignity of senator or patrician: but he received

from the emperor an ample estate in the province of Galatia, where the abdicated monarch retired with his family and friends, to a life of peace, of affluence, and perhaps of content³⁴. The daughters of Hilderic were entertained with the respectful tenderness due to their age and misfortune, and Justinian and Theodora accepted the honour of educating and enriching the female descendants of the great Theodosius. The bravest of the Vandal youth were distributed into five squadrons of cavalry, which adopted the name of their benefactor, and supported in the Persian wars the glory of their ancestors. But these rare exceptions, the reward of birth or valour, are insufficient to explain the fate of a nation, whose numbers, before a short and bloodless war, amounted to more than six hundred thousand persons. After the exile of their king and nobles, the servile crowd might purchase their safety, by abjuring their character, religion, and language; and their degenerate posterity would be insensibly mingled with the common herd of African subjects. Yet even in the present age, and in the heart of the Moorish tribes, a curious traveller has discovered the white complexion and long flaxen hair of a northern race³⁵; and it was formerly believed, that the boldest of the Vandals fled beyond the power, or even the knowledge, of the Romans, to enjoy their solitary freedom on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean³⁶. Africa had been their empire, it became their prison; nor could they entertain an hope, or even a wish, of

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returning to the banks of the Elbe, where their brethren of a spirit less adventurous, still wandered in their native forests. It was impossible for cowards to surmount the barriers of unknown seas and hostile Barbarians: it was impossible for brave men to expose their nakedness and defeat before the eyes of their countrymen, to describe the kingdoms which they had lost, and to claim a share of the humble inheritance, which, in a happier hour, they had almost unanimously renounced³⁷. In the country between the Elbe and the Oder, several populous villages of Lusatia are inhabited by the Vandals: they still preserve their language, their customs, and the purity of their blood; support with some impatience, the Saxon, or Prussian yoke; and serve with secret and voluntary allegiance, the descendant of their ancient kings, who in his garb and present fortune is confounded with the meanest of his vassals³⁸. The name and situation of this unhappy people might indicate their descent from one common stock with the conquerors of Africa. But the use of a Slavonian dialect more clearly represents them as the last remnant of the new colonies, who succeeded to the genuine Vandals, already scattered or destroyed in the age of Procopius³⁹.

Manners and
defeat of the
Moors,
A. D. 535.

If Belisarius had been tempted to hesitate in his allegiance, he might have urged, even against the emperor himself, the indispensable duty of saving Africa from an enemy more barbarous than the Vandals. The origin of the Moors is involved in darkness; they were ignorant of the use of letters⁴⁰.

Their limits cannot be precisely defined: a boundless continent was open to the Libyan shepherds; the change of seasons and pastures regulated their motions; and their rude huts and slender furniture were transported with the same ease as their arms, their families, and their cattle, which consisted of sheep, oxen, and camels⁴¹. During the vigour of the Roman power, they observed a respectful distance from Carthage and the sea-shore; under the feeble reign of the Vandals, they invaded the cities of Numidia, occupied the sea-coast from Tangier to Cæsarea, and pitched their camps, with impunity, in the fertile province of Byzacium. The formidable strength and artful conduct of Belisarius secured the Neutrality of the Moorish princes, whose vanity aspired to receive, in the emperor's name, the ensigns of their regal dignity⁴². They were astonished by the rapid event, and trembled in the presence of their conqueror. But his approaching departure soon relieved the apprehensions of a savage and superstitious people; the number of their wives allowed them to disregard the safety of their infant hostages; and when the Roman general hoisted sail in the port of Carthage, he heard the cries, and almost beheld the flames, of the desolated province. Yet he persisted in his resolution; and leaving only a part of his guards to reinforce the feeble garrisons, he entrusted the command of Africa to the eunuch Solomon⁴³, who proved himself not unworthy to be the successor of Belisarius. In the first

CHAP. XLII. invasion, some detachments, with two officers of merit, were surpris'd and intercepted; but Solomon speedily assembled his troops, marched from Carthage into the heart of the country, and in two great battles destroyed sixty thousand of the Barbarians. The Moors depended on their multitude, their swiftness, and their inaccessible mountains; and the aspect and smell of their camels are said to have produced some confusion in the Roman cavalry⁴⁴. But as soon as they were commanded to dismount, they derided this contemptible obstacle: as soon as the columns ascended the hills, the naked and disorderly crowd was dazzled by glittering arms and regular evolutions; and the menace of their female prophets was repeatedly fulfilled, that the Moors should be discomfited by a *beardless* antagonist. The victorious eunuch advanced thirteen days journey from Carthage, to besiege mount Aurafius⁴⁵, the citadel, and at the same time the garden of Numidia. That range of hills, a branch of the great Atlas, contains within a circumference of one hundred and twenty miles, a rare variety of soil and climate; the intermediate vallies and elevated plains abound with rich pastures, perpetual streams, and fruits of a delicious taste and uncommon magnitude. This fair solitude is decorated with the ruins of Lambesa, a Roman city, once the seat of a legion, and the residence of forty thousand inhabitants. The Ionic temple of Æsculapius is encompassed with Moorish huts; and the cattle now graze in

the midst of an amphitheatre, under the shade of Corinthian columns. A sharp perpendicular rock rises above the level of the mountain, where the African princes deposited their wives and treasure; and a proverb is familiar to the Arabs, that the man may eat fire, who dares to attack the craggy cliffs and inhospitable natives of mount Aurafius. This hardy enterprize was twice attempted by the eunuch Solomon: from the first, he retreated with some disgrace; and in the second, his patience and provisions were almost exhausted; and he must again have retired, if he had not yielded to the impetuous courage of his troops, who audaciously scaled, to the astonishment of the Moors, the mountain, the hostile camp, and the summit of the Geminian rock. A citadel was erected to secure this important conquest, and to remind the Barbarians of their defeat: and as Solomon pursued his march to the west, the long-lost province of Mauritanian Sitifi was again annexed to the Roman empire. The Moorish war continued several years after the departure of Belisarius; but the laurels which he resigned to a faithful lieutenant, may be justly ascribed to his own triumph.

The experience of past faults, which may sometimes correct the mature age of an individual, is seldom profitable to the successive generations of mankind. The nations of antiquity, careless of each other's safety, were separately vanquished and enslaved by the Romans. This

Neutrality of
the Visigoths

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awful lesson might have instructed the Barbarians of the West to oppose, with timely counsels and confederate arms, the unbounded ambition of Justinian. Yet the same error was repeated, the same consequences were felt, and the Goths, both of Italy and Spain, insensible of their approaching danger, beheld with indifference, and even with joy, the rapid downfall of the Vandals. After the failure of the royal line, Theudes, a valiant and powerful chief, ascended the throne of Spain, which he had formerly administered in the name of Theodoric and his infant grandson. Under his command, the Visigoths besieged the fortrefs of Ceuta on the African coast: but, while they spent the sabbath-day in peace and devotion, the pious security of their camp was invaded by a sally from the town; and the king himself, with some difficulty and danger, escaped from the hands of a sacrilegious enemy ⁴⁶. It was not long before his pride and resentment were gratified by a suppliant embassy from the unfortunate Gelimer, who implored, in his distress, the aid of the Spanish monarch. But instead of sacrificing these unworthy passions to the dictates of generosity and prudence, Theudes amused the ambassadors, till he was secretly informed of the loss of Carthage, and then dismissed them with obscure and contemptuous advice, to seek in their native country a true knowledge of the state of the Vandals ⁴⁷. The long continuance of the Italian war delayed the punishment of the Visigoths; and the eyes of

Conquests of
the Romans
in Spain,

Theudes were closed before they tasted the fruits of his mistaken policy. After his death, the sceptre of Spain was disputed by a civil war. The weaker candidate solicited the protection of Justinian, and ambitiously subscribed a treaty of alliance, which deeply wounded the independence and happiness of his country. Several cities, both on the ocean and the Mediterranean, were ceded to the Roman troops, who afterwards refused to evacuate those pledges, as it should seem, either of safety or payment; and as they were fortified by perpetual supplies from Africa, they maintained their impregnable stations, for the mischievous purpose of inflaming the civil and religious factions of the Barbarians. Seventy years elapsed before this painful thorn could be extirpated from the bosom of the monarchy; and as long as the emperors retained any share of these remote and useless possessions, their vanity might number Spain in the list of their provinces, and the successors of Alaric in the rank of their vassals ⁴⁸.

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XLI.

A. D.

550—620.

The error of the Goths who reigned in Italy, was less excusable than that of the Spanish brethren, and their punishment was still more immediate and terrible. From a motive of a private revenge, they enabled their most dangerous enemy to destroy their most valuable ally. A sister of the great Theodoric had been given in marriage to Thrasimond the African king ⁴⁹: on this occasion, the fortress of Lilybæum ⁵⁰ in Sicily was resigned to the Vandals; and the prin-

Belisarius
threatens the
Ostrogoths of
Italy,

A. D. 534.

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cess Amalafrida was attended by a martial train of one thousand nobles, and five thousand Gothic soldiers, who signalized their valour in the Moorish wars. Their merit was over-rated by themselves, and perhaps neglected by the Vandals: they viewed the country with envy, and the conquerors with disdain; but their real or fictitious conspiracy was prevented by a massacre; the Goths were oppressed, and the captivity of Amalafrida was soon followed by her secret and suspicious death. The eloquent pen of Cassiodorus was employed to reproach the Vandal court with the cruel violation of every social and public duty; but the vengeance which he threatened in the name of his sovereign, might be derided with impunity, as long as Africa was protected by the sea, and the Goths were destitute of a navy. In the blind impotence of grief and indignation, they joyfully saluted the approach of the Romans, entertained the fleet of Belisarius in the ports of Sicily, and were speedily delighted or alarmed by the surprising intelligence, that their revenge was executed beyond the measure of their hopes, or perhaps of their wishes. To their friendship the emperor was indebted for the kingdom of Africa, and the Goths might reasonably think, that they were entitled to resume the possession of a barren rock, so recently separated as a nuptial gift from the island of Sicily. They were soon undeceived by the haughty mandate of Belisarius, which excited their tardy and unavailing repentance. "The city and promontory of

“ Lilybæum, ” said the Roman general, “ be-
 “ longed to the Vandals, and I claim them by
 “ the right of conquest. Your submission may
 “ deserve the favour of the emperor; your ob-
 “ stinacy will provoke his displeasure, and must
 “ kindle a war, that can terminate only in your
 “ utter ruin. If you compel us to take up arms,
 “ we shall contend, not to regain the possession
 “ of a single city, but to deprive you of all the
 “ provinces which you unjustly withhold from
 “ their lawful sovereign. ” A nation of two hun-
 dred thousand soldiers might have smiled at the
 vain menace of Justinian and his lieutenant: but
 a spirit of discord and disaffection prevailed in
 Italy, and the Goths supported, with reluctance,
 the indignity of a female reign ”.

The birth of Amalasontha, the regent and
 queen of Italy ”, united the two most illustrious
 families of the Barbarians. Her mother, the sister
 of Clovis, was descended from the long-haired
 kings of the *Merovingian* race ”; and the regal
 succession of the *Amali* was illustrated in the ele-
 venth generation, by her father, the great Theo-
 doric, whose merit might have ennobled a ple-
 beian origin. The sex of his daughter excluded
 her from the Gothic throne; but his vigilant
 tenderness for his family and his people discovered
 the last heir of the royal line, whose ancestors
 had taken refuge in Spain; and the fortunate
 Eutharic was suddenly exalted to the rank of a
 consul and a prince. He enjoyed only a short
 time the charms of Amalasontha, and the hopes

Government
 and death of
 Amalason-
 tha, queen of
 Italy,
 A. D.
 522—534.

C H A P. of the succession; and his widow, after the death
 XLI. of her husband and father, was left the guardian
 of her son Athalaric, and the kingdom of Italy.
 At the age of about twenty-eight years, the
 endowments of her mind and person had attained
 their perfect maturity. Her beauty, which, in
 the apprehension of Theodora herself, might
 have disputed the conquest of an emperor, was
 animated by manly sense, activity, and resolu-
 tion. Education and experience had cultivated
 her talents; her philosophic studies were exempt
 from vanity; and, though she expressed herself
 with equal elegance and ease in the Greek, the
 Latin, and the Gothic tongue, the daughter of
 Theodoric maintained in her counsels a discreet
 and impenetrable silence. By a faithful imitation
 of the virtues, she revived the prosperity, of
 his reign: while she strove, with pious care, to
 expiate the faults, and to obliterate the darker
 memory of his declining age. The children of
 Boethius and Symmachus were restored to their
 paternal inheritance: her extreme lenity never
 consented to inflict any corporal or pecuniary
 penalties on her Roman subjects; and she gener-
 ously despised the clamours of the Goths, who,
 at the end of forty years, still considered the
 people of Italy as their slaves or their enemies.
 Her salutary measures were directed by the wis-
 dom, and celebrated by the eloquence of Cassio-
 dorus; she solicited and deserved the friendship
 of the emperor; and the kingdoms of Europe
 respected, both in peace and war, the majesty
 of

of the Gothic throne. But the future happiness of the queen and of Italy depended on the education of her son; who was destined by his birth, to support the different and almost incompatible characters of the chief of a Barbarian camp, and the first magistrate of a civilized nation. From the age of ten years⁵⁴, Athalaric was diligently instructed in the arts and sciences, either useful or ornamental for a Roman prince; and three venerable Goths were chosen to instil the principles of honour and virtue into the mind of their young king. But the pupil who is insensible of the benefits, must abhor the restraints, of education; and the sollicitude of the queen, which affection rendered anxious and severe, offended the untractable nature of her son and his subjects. On a solemn festival, when the Goths were assembled in the palace of Ravenna, the royal youth escaped from his mother's apartment, and, with tears of pride and anger, complained of a blow which his stubborn disobedience had provoked her to inflict. The Barbarians resented the indignity which had been offered to their king, accused the regent of conspiring against his life and crown; and imperiously demanded, that the grandson of Theodoric should be rescued from the dastardly discipline of women and pedants, and educated, like a valiant Goth, in the society of his equals, and the glorious ignorance of his ancestors. To this rude clamour, importunately urged as the voice of the nation, Amalasontha was compelled to yield her reason,

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and the dearest wishes of her heart. The king of Italy was abandoned to wine, to women, and to rustic sports; and the indiscreet contempt of the ungrateful youth, betrayed the mischievous designs of his favourites and her enemies. Encompassed with domestic foes, she entered into a secret negociation with the emperor Justinian; obtained the assurance of a friendly reception, and had actually deposited at Dyrrachium in Epirus, a treasure of forty thousand pounds of gold. Happy would it have been for her fame and safety, if she had calmly retired from barbarous faction, to the peace and splendour of Constantinople. But the mind of Amalasontha was inflamed by ambition and revenge; and while her ships lay at anchor in the port, she waited for the success of a crime which her passions excused or applauded as an act of justice. Three of the most dangerous malecontents had been separately removed, under the pretence of trust and command, to the frontiers of Italy: they were assassinated by her private emissaries; and the blood of these noble Goths rendered the queen-mother absolute in the court of Ravenna, and justly odious to a free people. But if she had lamented the disorders of her son, she soon wept his irreparable loss; and the death of Athalaric, who, at the age of sixteen, was consumed by premature intemperance, left her destitute of any firm support or legal authority. Instead of submitting to the laws of her country, which held as a fundamental maxim, that the succession

could never pass from the lance to the distaff, the daughter of Theodoric conceived the impracticable design of sharing, with one of her cousins, the regal title, and of reserving in her own hands the substance of supreme power. He received the proposal with profound respect and affected gratitude; and the eloquent Cassiodorus announced to the senate and the emperor, that Amalasontha and Theodatus had ascended the throne of Italy. His birth (for his mother was the sister of Theodoric) might be considered as an imperfect title; and the choice of Amalasontha was more strongly directed by her contempt of his avarice and pusillanimity, which had deprived him of the love of the Italians, and the esteem of the Barbarians. But Theodatus was exasperated by the contempt which he deserved: her justice had repressed and reproached the oppression which he exercised against his Tuscan neighbours; and the principal Goths, united by common guilt and resentment, conspired to instigate his slow and timid disposition. The letters of congratulation were scarcely dispatched before the queen of Italy was imprisoned in a small island of the lake of Bolsena, where, after a short confinement, she was strangled in the bath, by the order, or with the connivance of the new king, who instructed his turbulent subjects to shed the blood of their sovereigns.

Her exile and death,
A. D. 535,
April 30.

Justinian beheld with joy the dissensions of the Goths; and the mediation of an ally concealed

Belisarius invades and subdues

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XLI.

Sicily,

A. D. 535,

Dec. 21.

and promoted the ambitious views of the conqueror. His ambassadors, in their public audience, demanded the fortrefs of Lilybæum, ten Barbarian fugitives, and a just compensation for the pillage of a small town on the Illyrian borders; but they secretly negociated with Theodatus to betray the province of Tuscany, and tempted Amalasontha to extricate herself from danger and perplexity, by a free surrender of the kingdom of Italy. A false and fervile epistle was subscribed by the reluctant hand of the captive queen; but the confession of the Roman senators, who were sent to Constantinople, revealed the truth of her deplorable situation; and Justinian, by the voice of a new ambassador, most powerfully interceded for her life and liberty. Yet the secret instructions of the same minister were adapted to serve the cruel jealousy of Theodora, who dreaded the presence and superior charms of a rival: he prompted, with artful and ambiguous hints, the execution of a crime so useful to the Romans; received the intelligence of her death with grief and indignation, and denounced in his master's name, immortal war against the perfidious assassin. In Italy, as well as in Africa, the guilt of an usurper appeared to justify the arms of Justinian; but the forces which he prepared, were insufficient for the subversion of a mighty kingdom, if their feeble numbers had not been multiplied by the name, the spirit, and the conduct of an hero. A chosen troop of guards, who served on horseback, and were armed with lances and

bucklers, attended the person of Belisarius: his cavalry was composed of two hundred Huns, three hundred Moors, and four thousand *confederates*, and the infantry consisted only of three thousand Isaurians. Steering the same course as in his former expedition, the Roman consul cast anchor before Catana in Sicily, to survey the strength of the island, and to decide whether he should attempt the conquest, or peaceably pursue his voyage for the African coast. He found a fruitful land and a friendly people. Notwithstanding the decay of agriculture, Sicily still supplied the granaries of Rome: the farmers were graciously exempted from the oppression of military quarters; and the Goths, who trusted the defence of the island to the inhabitants, had some reason to complain, that their confidence was ungratefully betrayed. Instead of soliciting and expecting the aid of the king of Italy, they yielded to the first summons a cheerful obedience: and this province, the first fruits of the Punic wars, was again, after a long separation, united to the Roman empire". The Gothic garrison of Palermo, which alone attempted to resist, was reduced after a short siege, by a singular stratagem. Belisarius introduced his ships into the deepest recess of the harbour; their boats were laboriously hoisted with ropes and pulleys to the topmast head, and he filled them with archers, who, from that superior station, commanded the ramparts of the city. After this easy, though successful campaign, the conqueror entered

CHAP. XLII. Syracuse in triumph, at the head of his victorious bands, distributing gold medals to the people, on the day which so gloriously terminated the year of the consulship. He passed the winter season in the palace of ancient kings, amidst the ruins of a Grecian colony, which once extended to a circumference of two and twenty miles⁵⁸: but in the spring, about the festival of Easter, the prosecution of his designs was interrupted by a dangerous revolt of the African forces. Carthage was saved by the presence of Belisarius, who suddenly landed with a thousand guards. Two thousand soldiers of doubtful faith returned to the standard of their old commander: and he marched, without hesitation, above fifty miles, to seek an enemy, whom he affected to pity and despise. Eight thousand rebels trembled at his approach; they were routed at the first onset, by the dexterity of their master: and this ignoble victory would have restored the peace of Africa, if the conqueror had not been hastily recalled to Sicily, to appease a sedition which was kindled during his absence in his own camp⁵⁹. Disorder and disobedience were the common malady of the times: the genius to command, and the virtue to obey, resided only in the mind of Belisarius,

Reign and
weakness of
Theodatus,
the Gothic
king of Italy,
A. D. 534,

Although Theodatus descended from a race of heroes, he was ignorant of the art, and averse to the dangers, of war. Although he had studied the writings of Plato and Tully, philosophy was incapable of purifying his mind from the basest

passions, avarice and fear. He had purchased a sceptre by ingratitude and murder: at the first menace of an enemy, he degraded his own majesty, and that of a nation, which already disdained their unworthy sovereign. Astonished by the recent example of Gelimer, he saw himself dragged in chains through the streets of Constantinople: the terrors which Belisarius inspired, were heightened by the eloquence of Peter, the Byzantine ambassador; and that bold and subtle advocate persuaded him to sign a treaty, too ignominious to become the foundation of a lasting peace. It was stipulated, that in the acclamations of the Roman people, the name of the emperor should be always proclaimed before that of the Gothic king; and that as often as the statue of Theodatus was erected in brass or marble, the divine image of Justinian should be placed on its right hand. Instead of conferring, the king of Italy was reduced to solicit, the honours of the senate; and the consent of the emperor was made indispensable before he could execute, against a priest or senator, the sentence either of death or confiscation. The feeble monarch resigned the possession of Sicily; offered, as the annual mark of his dependence, a crown of gold, of the weight of three hundred pounds; and promised to supply, at the requisition of his sovereign, three thousand Gothic auxiliaries for the service of the empire. Satisfied with these extraordinary concessions, the successful agent of Justinian hastened his journey to Constantinople;

C H A P.

XLI.

October —

A. D. 536,

August.

C H A P. but no sooner had he reached the Alban
 XLI. villa °, than he was recalled by the anxiety
 of Theodatus; and the dialogue which passed
 between the king and the ambassador deserves to
 be represented in its original simplicity. “ Are
 “ you of opinion that the emperor will ratify this
 “ treaty? *Perhaps.* If he refuses, what conse-
 “ quence will ensue? *War.* Will such a war be
 “ just or reasonable? *Most assuredly: every one*
 “ *should act according to his character.* What is your
 “ meaning? *You are a philosopher — Justinian is em-*
 “ *peror of the Romans: it would ill become the dis-*
 “ *ciple of Plato to shed the blood of thousands in his*
 “ *private quarrel: the successor of Augustus should*
 “ *vindicate his rights, and recover by arms the ancient*
 “ *provinces of his empire.* ” This reasoning might
 not convince, but it was sufficient to alarm and
 subdue the weakness of Theodatus; and he soon
 descended to his last offer, that for the poor equi-
 valent of a pension of forty-eight thousand pounds
 sterling, he would resign the kingdom of the
 Goths and Italians, and spend the remainder of
 his days in the innocent pleasures of philosophy
 and agriculture. Both treaties were entrusted to
 the hands of the ambassador, on the frail secu-
 rity of an oath not to produce the second till the
 first had been positively rejected. The event may
 be easily foreseen: Justinian required and accept-
 ed the abdication of the Gothic king. His inde-
 fatigable agent returned from Constantinople to
 Ravenna, with ample instructions; and a fair
 epistle, which praised the wisdom and generosity

of the royal philosopher, granted his pension, with the assurance of such honours as a subject and a Catholic might enjoy; and wisely referred the final execution of the treaty, to the presence and authority of Belisarius. But in the interval of suspense, two Roman generals, who had entered the province of Dalmatia, were defeated and slain by the Gothic troops. From blind and abject despair, Theodatus capriciously rose to groundless and fatal presumption⁶¹, and dared to receive with menace and contempt, the ambassador of Justinian, who claimed his promise, solicited the allegiance of his subjects, and boldly asserted the inviolable privilege of his own character. The march of Belisarius dispelled this visionary pride; and as the first campaign⁶² was employed in the reduction of Sicily, the invasion of Italy is applied by Procopius to the second year of the GOTHIC WAR⁶³.

After Belisarius had left sufficient garrisons in Palermo and Syracuse, he embarked his troops at Messina, and landed them, without resistance, on the opposite shores of Rhegium. A Gothic prince, who had married the daughter of Theodatus, was stationed with an army to guard the entrance of Italy; but he imitated, without scruple, the example of a sovereign, faithless to his public and private duties. The perfidious Ebermor deserted with his followers to the Roman camp, and was dismissed to enjoy the servile honours of the Byzantine court⁶⁴. From Rhegium to Naples, the fleet and army of Belisarius, almost always

Belisarius invades Italy, and reduces Naples, A. D. 537.

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in view of each other, advanced near three hundred miles along the sea-coast. The people of Bruttium, Lucania, and Campania, who abhorred the name and religion of the Goths, embraced the specious excuse, that their ruined walls were incapable of defence: the soldiers paid a just equivalent for a plentiful market; and curiosity alone interrupted the peaceful occupations of the husbandman or artificer. Naples, which has swelled to a great and populous capital, long cherished the language and manners of a Grecian colony[“]; and the choice of Virgil had ennobled this elegant retreat, which attracted the lovers of repose and study, from the noise, the smoke, and the laborious opulence of Rome[“]. As soon as the place was invested by sea and land, Belisarius gave audience to the deputies of the people, who exhorted him to disregard a conquest unworthy of his arms, to seek the Gothic king in a field of battle, and after his victory, to claim, as the sovereign of Rome, the allegiance of the dependent cities. “When I treat with my enemies,” replied the Roman chief, with an haughty smile, “I am more accustomed to give than to receive counsel: but I hold in one hand inevitable ruin, and in the other, peace and freedom, such as Sicily now enjoys.” The impatience of delay urged him to grant the most liberal terms; his honour secured their performance: but Naples was divided into two factions; and the Greek democracy was inflamed by their orators, who, with much spirit and some truth, represented to the

multitude, that the Goths would punish their defection, and that Belisarius himself must esteem their loyalty and valour. Their deliberations, however, were not perfectly free: the city was commanded by eight hundred Barbarians, whose wives and children were detained at Ravenna as the pledge of their fidelity; and even the Jews, who were rich and numerous, resisted, with desperate enthusiasm, the intolerant laws of Justinian. In a much later period, the circumference of Naples ⁶⁷ measured only two thousand three hundred and sixty-three paces ⁶⁸: the fortifications were defended by precipices or the sea; when the aqueducts were intercepted, a supply of water might be drawn from wells and fountains; and the stock of provisions was sufficient to consume the patience of the besiegers. At the end of twenty days, that of Belisarius was almost exhausted, and he had reconciled himself to the disgrace of abandoning the siege, that he might march, before the winter season, against Rome and the Gothic king. But his anxiety was relieved by the bold curiosity of an Isaurian, who explored the dry channel of an aqueduct, and secretly reported, that a passage might be perforated to introduce a file of armed soldiers into the heart of the city. When the work had been silently executed, the humane general risked the discovery of his secret, by a last and fruitless admonition of the impending danger. In the darkness of the night, four hundred Romans entered the aqueduct, raised themselves by a rope, which

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they fastened to an olive tree, into the house or garden of a solitary matron, sounded their trumpets, surprised the centinels, and gave admittance to their companions, who on all sides scaled the walls, and burst open the gates of the city. Every crime which is punished by social justice, was practised as the rights of war; the Huns were distinguished by cruelty and sacrilege, and Belisarius alone appeared in the streets and churches of Naples, to moderate the calamities which he predicted. "The gold and silver," he repeatedly exclaimed, "are the just rewards of your valour. "But spare the inhabitants, they are "Christians, they are suppliants, they are now "your fellow-subjects. Restore the children to "their parents, the wives to their husbands; "and shew them by your generosity, of what "friends they have obstinately deprived themselves." The city was saved by the virtue and authority of its conqueror⁷⁰; and when the Neapolitans returned to their houses, they found some consolation in the secret enjoyment of their hidden treasures. The Barbarian garrison enlisted in the service of the emperor; Apulia and Calabria, delivered from the odious presence of the Goths, acknowledged his dominion; and the tusks of the Calydonian boar, which were still shewn at Beneventum, are curiously described by the historian of Belisarius⁷⁰.

Vitiges, king
of Italy,
A. D. 536,

The faithful soldiers and citizens of Naples had expected their deliverance from a prince, who remained the inactive and almost indifferent spec-

tator of their ruin. Theodatus secured his person within the walls of Rome, while his cavalry advanced forty miles on the Appian way, and encamped in the Pomptine marshes; which, by a canal of nineteen miles in length, had been recently drained and converted into excellent pastures⁷¹. But the principal forces of the Goths were dispersed in Dalmatia, Venetia, and Gaul; and the feeble mind of their king was confounded by the unsuccessful event of a divination, which seemed to presage the downfall of his empire⁷². The most abject slaves have arraigned the guilt or weakness of an unfortunate master. The character of Theodatus was rigorously scrutinized by a free and idle camp of Barbarians, conscious of their privilege and power: he was declared unworthy of his race, his nation, and his throne; and their general Vitiges, whose valour had been signalized in the Illyrian war, was raised with unanimous applause on the bucklers of his companions. On the first rumour, the abdicated monarch fled from the justice of his country; but he was pursued by private revenge. A Goth whom he had injured in his love, overtook Theodatus on the Flaminian way, and regardless of his unmanly cries, slaughtered him, as he lay prostrate on the ground, like a victim (says the historian) at the foot of the altar. The choice of the people is the best and purest title to reign over them: yet such is the prejudice of every age, that Vitiges impatiently wished to return to Ravenna, where he might seize, with the reluctant hand of the

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August—

A. D. 540.

CHAPTER. daughter of Amalasontha, some faint shadow of
 XLI. hereditary right. A national council was immediately held, and the new monarch reconciled the impatient spirit of the Barbarians, to a measure of disgrace, which the misconduct of his predecessor rendered wise and indispensable. The Goths consented to retreat in the presence of a victorious enemy; to delay till the next spring the operations of offensive war; to summon their scattered forces; to relinquish their distant possessions, and to trust even Rome itself to the faith of its inhabitants. Leuderis, an aged warrior, was left in the capital with four thousand soldiers; a feeble garrison, which might have seconded the zeal, though it was incapable of opposing the wishes, of the Romans. But a momentary enthusiasm of religion and patriotism was kindled in their minds. They furiously exclaimed, that the apostolic throne should no longer be profaned by the triumph or toleration of Arianism; that the tombs of the Cæsars should no longer be trampled by the savages of the north; and without reflecting, that Italy must sink into a province of Constantinople, they fondly hailed the restoration of a Roman emperor as a new æra of freedom and prosperity. The deputies of the pope and clergy, of the senate and people, invited the lieutenant of Justinian to accept their voluntary allegiance, and to enter the city, whose gates would be thrown open for his reception. As soon as Belisarius had fortified his new conquests, Naples and Cumæ,

he advanced about twenty miles to the banks of the Vulturnus, contemplated the decayed grandeur of Capua, and halted at the separation of the Latin and Appian ways. The work of the cenfor, after the incessant use of nine centuries, still preserved its primæval beauty, and not a flaw could be discovered in the large polished stones, of which that solid, though narrow road, was so firmly compacted⁷³. Belisarius, however, preferred the Latin way, which, at a distance from the sea and the marshes, skirted in a space of one hundred and twenty miles along the foot of the mountains. His enemies had disappeared; when he made his entrance through the Asinarian gate, the garrison departed without molestation along the Flaminian way; and the city, after sixty years servitude, was delivered from the yoke of the Barbarians. Leuderis alone, from a motive of pride or discontent, refused to accompany the fugitives; and the Gothic chief, himself a trophy of the victory, was sent with the keys of Rome, to the throne of the emperor Justinian⁷⁴.

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Belisarius
enters Rome,
A. D. 536,
Dec. 10.

The first days, which coincided with the old Saturnalia, were devoted to mutual congratulation and the public joy, and the Catholics prepared to celebrate, without a rival, the approaching festival of the nativity of Christ. In the familiar conversation of an hero, the Romans acquired some notion of the virtues which history ascribed to their ancestors; they were edified by the apparent respect of Belisarius for the suc-

Siege of
Rome by the
Goths,
A. D. 537,
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cessor of St. Peter, and his rigid discipline secured in the midst of war the blessings of tranquillity and justice. They applauded the rapid success of his arms, which over-ran the adjacent country, as far as Narni, Perugia, and Spoleto; but they trembled, the senate, the clergy, and the unwarlike people, as soon as they understood, that he had resolved, and would speedily be reduced, to sustain a siege against the powers of the Gothic monarchy. The designs of Vitiges were executed, during the winter season, with diligence and effect. From their rustic habitations, from their distant garrisons, the Goths assembled at Ravenna for the defence of their country, and such were their numbers, that after an army had been detached for the relief of Dalmatia, one hundred and fifty thousand fighting men marched under the royal standard. According to the degrees of rank or merit, the Gothic king distributed arms and horses, rich gifts, and liberal promises: he moved along the Flaminian way, declined the useless sieges of Perugia and Spoleto, respected the impregnable rock of Narni, and arrived within two miles of Rome at the foot of the Milvian bridge. The narrow passage was fortified with a tower, and Belisarius had computed the value of the twenty days, which must be lost in the construction of another bridge. But the consternation of the soldiers of the tower, who either fled or deserted, disappointed his hopes, and betrayed his person into the most imminent danger. At the head of one thousand

thousand horse, the Roman general sallied from the Flaminian gate to mark the ground of an advantageous position, and to survey the camp of the Barbarians; but while he still believed them on the other side of the Tyber, he was suddenly encompassed and assaulted by their innumerable squadrons. The fate of Italy depended on his life; and the deserters pointed to the conspicuous horse, a bay⁷⁵, with a white face, which he rode on that memorable day. "Aim at the bay horse," was the universal cry. Every bow was bent, every javelin was directed against that fatal object, and the command was repeated and obeyed by thousands who were ignorant of its real motive. The bolder Barbarians advanced to the more honourable combat of swords and spears; and the praise of an enemy has graced the fall of Visandus, the standard-bearer⁷⁶, who maintained his foremost station, till he was pierced with thirteen wounds, perhaps by the hand of Belisarius himself. The Roman general was strong, active, and dextrous: on every side he discharged his weighty and mortal strokes: his faithful guards imitated his valour, and defended his person; and the Goths, after the loss of a thousand men, fled before the arms of an hero. They were rashly pursued to their camp; and the Romans, oppressed by multitudes, made a gradual, and at length a precipitate retreat to the gates of the city: the gates were shut against the fugitives; and the public terror was encreased,

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Valour of
Belisarius.

by the report, that Belisarius was slain. His countenance was indeed disfigured by sweat, dust, and blood; his voice was hoarse, his strength was almost exhausted; but his unconquerable spirit still remained; he imparted that spirit to his desponding companions; and their last desperate charge was felt by the flying Barbarians, as if a new army, vigorous and entire, had been poured from the city. The Flaminian gate was thrown open to a *real* triumph; but it was not before Belisarius had visited every post, and provided for the public safety, that he could be persuaded by his wife and friends, to taste the needful refreshments of food and sleep. In the more improved state of the art of war, a general is seldom required, or even permitted to display the personal prowess of a soldier; and the example of Belisarius may be added to the rare examples of Henry IV. of Pyrrhus, and of Alexander.

His defence
of Rome.

After this first and unsuccessful trial of their enemies, the whole army of the Goths passed the Tyber, and formed the siege of the city, which continued above a year, till their final departure. Whatever fancy may conceive, the severe compass of the geographer defines the circumference of Rome within a line of twelve miles and three hundred and forty-five paces; and that circumference, except in the Vatican, has invariably been the same from the triumph of Aurelian, to the peaceful but obscure reign of the modern popes⁷⁷. But in the day of her greatness,

the space within her walls was crowded with habitations and inhabitants, and the populous suburbs that stretched along the public roads, were darted like so many rays from one common centre. Adversity swept away these extraneous ornaments, and left naked and desolate, a considerable part even of the seven hills. Yet Rome, in its present state, could send into the field above thirty thousand males of a military age⁷⁸; and, notwithstanding the want of discipline and exercise, the far greater part, enured to the hardships of poverty, might be capable of bearing arms for the defence of their country and religion. The prudence of Belisarius did not neglect this important resource. His soldiers were relieved by the zeal and diligence of the people, who watched while *they* slept, and laboured while *they* reposed: he accepted the voluntary service of the bravest and most indigent of the Roman youth; and the companies of townsmen sometimes represented, in a vacant post, the presence of the troops which had been drawn away to more essential duties. But his just confidence was placed in the veterans who had fought under his banner in the Persian and African wars; and although that gallant band was reduced to five thousand men, he undertook, with such contemptible numbers, to defend a circle of twelve miles, against an army of one hundred and fifty thousand Barbarians. In the walls of Rome, which Belisarius constructed or restored, the materials of ancient architecture may be discern-

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ed⁷⁹; and the whole fortification was completed, except in a chasm still extant between the Pincian and Flaminian gates, which the prejudices of the Goths and Romans left under the effectual guard of St. Peter the apostle⁸⁰. The battlements or bastions were shaped in sharp angles; a ditch, broad and deep, protected the foot of the rampart; and the archers on the rampart were assisted by military engines; the *balista*, a powerful cross-bow, which darted short but massy arrows; the *onagri*, or wild asses, which, on the principle of a sling, threw stones and bullets of an enormous size⁸¹. A chain was drawn across the Tyber; the arches of the aqueducts were made impervious, and the mole or sepulchre of Hadrian⁸² was converted, for the first time, to the uses of a citadel. That venerable structure which contained the ashes of the Antonines, was a circular turret rising from a quadrangular basis: it was covered with the white marble of Paros, and decorated by the statues of gods and heroes; and the lover of the arts must read with a sigh, that the works of Praxiteles or Lysippus were torn from their lofty pedestals, and hurled into the ditch on the heads of the besiegers⁸³. To each of his lieutenants, Belisarius assigned the defence of a gate, with the wise and peremptory instruction, that, whatever might be the alarm, they should steadily adhere to their respective posts, and trust their general for the safety of Rome. The formidable host of the Goths was insufficient to embrace the ample measure of the city: of

the fourteen gates, seven only were invested from the Prænestine to the Flaminian way; and Vitiges divided his troops into six camps, each of which was fortified with a ditch and rampart. On the Tuscan side of the river, a seventh encampment was formed in the field or circus of the Vatican, for the important purpose of commanding the Milvian bridge and the course of the Tyber; but they approached with devotion the adjacent church of St. Peter; and the threshold of the holy apostles was respected during the siege by a Christian enemy. In the ages of victory, as often as the senate decreed some distant conquest, the consul denounced hostilities, by unbarring, in solemn pomp, the gates of the temple of Janus³⁴. Domestic war now rendered the admonition superfluous, and the ceremony was superseded by the establishment of a new religion. But the brazen temple of Janus was left standing in the forum; of a size sufficient only to contain the statue of the god, five cubits in height, of a human form, but with two faces, directed to the east and west. The double gates were likewise of brass; and a fruitless effort to turn them on their rusty hinges, revealed the scandalous secret, that some Romans were still attached to the superstition of their ancestors.

Eighteen days were employed by the besiegers. to provide all the instruments of attack which antiquity had invented. Fascines were prepared to fill the ditches, scaling-ladders to ascend the walls. The largest trees of the forest supplied

Repulses a
general as-
sault of the
Goths.

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the timbers of four battering-rams; their heads were armed with iron; they were suspended by ropes, and each of them was worked by the labour of fifty men. The lofty wooden turrets moved on wheels or rollers, and formed a spacious platform of the level of the rampart. On the morning of the nineteenth day, a general attack was made from the Prænestine gate to the Vatican: seven Gothic columns, with their military engines, advanced to the assault; and the Romans who lined the ramparts, listened with doubt and anxiety to the cheerful assurances of their commander. As soon as the enemy approached the ditch, Belfarius himself drew the first arrow; and such was his strength and dexterity, that he transfixed the foremost of the Barbarian leaders. A shout of applause and victory was re-echoed along the wall. He drew a second arrow, and the stroke was followed with the same success and the same acclamation. The Roman general then gave the word, that the archers should aim at the teams of oxen; they were instantly covered with mortal wounds; the towers which they drew, remained useless and immovable, and a single moment disconcerted the laborious projects of the king of the Goths. After this disappointment, Vitiges still continued, or feigned to continue, the assault of the Salarian gate, that he might divert the attention of his adversary, while his principal forces more strenuously attacked the Prænestine gate and the sepulchre of Hadrian, at the distance of three

miles from each other. Near the former, the double walls of the Vivarium⁸⁵ were low or broken; the fortifications of the latter were feebly guarded: the vigour of the Goths was excited by the hope of victory and spoil; and if a single post had given way, the Romans, and Rome itself, were irrecoverably lost. This perilous day was the most glorious in the life of Belisarius. Amidst tumult and dismay, the whole plan of the attack and defence was distinctly present to his mind; he observed the changes of each instant, weighed every possible advantage, transported his person to the scenes of danger, and communicated his spirit in calm and decisive orders. The contest was fiercely maintained from the morning to the evening; the Goths were repulsed on all sides, and each Roman might boast, that he had vanquished thirty Barbarians, if the strange disproportion of numbers were not counterbalanced by the merit of one man. Thirty thousand Goths, according to the confession of their own chiefs, perished in this bloody action; and the multitude of the wounded was equal to that of the slain. When they advanced to the assault, their close disorder suffered not a javelin to fall without effect; and as they retired, the populace of the city joined in the pursuit, and slaughtered, with impunity, the backs of their flying enemies. Belisarius instantly sallied from the gates; and while the soldiers chaunted his name and victory, the hostile engines of war were reduced to ashes. Such was the loss

His sallies,

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and consternation of the Goths, that, from this day, the siege of Rome degenerated into a tedious and indolent blockade; and they were incessantly harassed by the Roman general, who, in frequent skirmishes, destroyed above five thousand of their bravest troops. Their cavalry was unpractised in the use of the bow; their archers served on foot; and this divided force was incapable of contending with their adversaries, whose lances and arrows, at a distance, or at hand, were alike formidable. The consummate skill of Belisarius embraced the favourable opportunities; and as he chose the ground and the moment, as he pressed the charge or sounded the retreat⁸⁶, the squadrons which he detached, were seldom unsuccessful. These partial advantages diffused an impatient ardour among the soldiers and people, who began to feel the hardships of a siege, and to disregard the dangers of a general engagement. Each plebeian conceived himself to be an hero, and the infantry, who, since the decay of discipline, were rejected from the line of battle, aspired to the ancient honours of the Roman legion. Belisarius praised the spirit of his troops, condemned their presumption, yielded to their clamours, and prepared the remedies of a defeat, the possibility of which he alone had courage to suspect. In the quarter of the Vatican, the Romans prevailed; and if the irreparable moments had not been wasted in the pillage of the camp, they might have occupied the Milvian bridge, and charged in the rear of the

Gothic host. On the other side of the Tyber, Belisarius advanced from the Pincian and Salarian gates. But his army, four thousand soldiers perhaps, was lost in a spacious plain; they were encompassed and oppressed by fresh multitudes, who continually relieved the broken ranks of the Barbarians. The valiant leaders of the infantry were unskilled to conquer; they died: the retreat (an hasty retreat) was covered by the prudence of the general, and the victors started back with affright from the formidable aspect of an armed rampart. The reputation of Belisarius was unshaken by a defeat; and the vain confidence of the Goths was not less serviceable to his designs, than the repentance and modesty of the Roman troops.

From the moment that Belisarius had determined to sustain a siege, his assiduous care provided Rome against the danger of famine, more dreadful than the Gothic arms. An extraordinary supply of corn was imported from Sicily: the harvests of Campania and Tuscany were forcibly swept for the use of the city; and the rights of private property were infringed by the strong plea of the public safety. It might easily be foreseen that the enemy would intercept the aqueducts; and the cessation of the water-mills was the first inconvenience, which was speedily removed by mooring large vessels, and fixing mill-stones, in the current of the river. The stream was soon embarrassed by the trunks of trees, and polluted with dead bodies; yet so effectual were the precautions of the Roman general, that the waters of the

Distress of
the city.

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Tyber still continued to give motion to the mills and drink to the inhabitants: the more distant quarters were supplied from domestic wells; and a besieged city might support, without impatience, the privation of her public baths. A large portion of Rome, from the Prænestine gate to the church of St. Paul, was never invested by the Goths; their excursions were restrained by the activity of the Moorish troops, the navigation of the Tyber, and the Latin, Appian, and Ostian ways, were left free and unmolested for the introduction of corn and cattle, or the retreat of the inhabitants, who sought a refuge in Campania or Sicily. Anxious to relieve himself from an useless and devouring multitude, Belisarius issued his peremptory orders for the instant departure of the women, the children, and slaves; required his soldiers to dismiss their male and female attendants, and regulated their allowance, that one moiety should be given in provisions, and the other in money. His foresight was justified by the encrease of the public distress as soon as the Goths had occupied two important posts in the neighbourhood of Rome. By the loss of the port, or as it is now called, the city of Porto, he was deprived of the country on the right of the Tyber, and the best communication with the sea; and he reflected with grief and anger, that three hundred men, could he have spared such a feeble band, might have defended its impregnable works. Seven miles from the capital, between the Appian and the Latin ways, two

principal aqueducts crossing, and again crossing each other, inclosed within their solid and lofty arches a fortified space⁸⁷, where Vitiges established a camp of seven thousand Goths to intercept the convoys of Sicily and Campania. The granaries of Rome were insensibly exhausted, the adjacent country had been wasted with fire and sword; such scanty supplies as might yet be obtained by hasty excursions, were the reward of valour, and the purchase of wealth: the forage of the horses, and the bread of the soldiers, never failed; but in the last months of the siege, the people was exposed to the miseries of scarcity, unwholesome food⁸⁸, and contagious disorders. Belisarius saw and pitied their sufferings; but he had foreseen, and he watched the decay of their loyalty, and the progress of their discontent. Adversity had awakened the Romans from the dreams of grandeur and freedom, and taught them the humiliating lesson, that it was of small moment to their real happiness, whether the name of their master was derived from the Gothic or the Latin language. The lieutenant of Justinian listened to their just complaints, but he rejected with disdain the idea of flight or capitulation; repressed their clamorous impatience for battle; amused them with the prospect of sure and speedy relief; and secured himself and the city from the effects of their despair or treachery. Twice in each month he changed the station of the officers to whom the custody of the gates was committed: the various precautions, of patrols, watch-words, lights, and music, were

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Exile of pope
Silverius,
A. D. 537,
Nov. 17.

repeatedly employed to discover whatever passed on the ramparts; outguards were posted beyond the ditch, and the trusty vigilance of dogs supplied the more doubtful fidelity of mankind. A letter was intercepted, which assured the king of the Goths, that the Asinarian gate, adjoining to the Lateran church, should be secretly opened to his troops. On the proof or suspicion of treason, several senators were banished, and the pope Silverius was summoned to attend the representative of his sovereign, at his head-quarters in the Pincian palace⁸⁹. The ecclesiastics who followed their bishop, were detained in the first or second apartment⁹⁰, and he alone was admitted to the presence of Belisarius. The conqueror of Rome and Carthage was modestly seated at the feet of Antonina, who reclined on a stately couch: the general was silent, but the voice of reproach and menace issued from the mouth of his imperious wife. Accused by credible witnesses, and the evidence of his own subscription, the successor of St. Peter was despoiled of his pontifical ornaments, clad in the mean habit of a monk, and embarked, without delay, for a distant exile in the East. At the emperor's command, the clergy of Rome proceeded to the choice of a new bishop; and after a solemn invocation of the Holy Ghost, elected the deacon Vigilius, who had purchased the papal throne by a bribe of two hundred pounds of gold. The profit, and consequently the guilt of this simony, was imputed to Belisarius: but the hero obeyed

the orders of his wife ; Antonina served the passions of the empress ; and Theodora lavished her treasures, in the vain hope of obtaining a pontiff hostile or indifferent to the council of Chalcedon".

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The epistle of Belisarius to the emperor announced his victory, his danger, and his resolution. Deliverance
of the city.

" According to your commands, we have entered
" the dominions of the Goths, and reduced to
" your obedience, Sicily, Campania, and the
" city of Rome: but the loss of these conquests
" will be more disgraceful than their acquisition
" was glorious. Hitherto we have successfully
" fought against the multitudes of the Barbarians,
" but their multitudes may finally prevail. Victory
" is the gift of Providence, but the reputation
" of kings and generals depends on the success
" or the failure of their designs. Permit me to
" speak with freedom ; if you wish that we
" should live, send us subsistence ; if you de-
" sire that we should conquer, send us arms,
" horses, and men. The Romans have received
" us as friends and deliverers ; but in our present
" distress, *they* will be either betrayed by their
" confidence, or we shall be oppressed by *their*
" treachery and hatred. For myself, my
" life is consecrated to your service : it is
" yours to reflect, whether my death in this
" situation will contribute to the glory and
" prosperity of your reign." Perhaps that reign
would have been equally prosperous, if the
peaceful master of the East had abstained from
the conquest of Africa and Italy : but as Justinian

C H A P. was ambitious of fame, he made some efforts,
 XLI. they were feeble and languid, to support and
 rescue his victorious general. A reinforcement
 of sixteen hundred Sclavonians and Huns was
 led by Martin and Valerian ; and as they
 had reposed during the winter season in the
 harbours of Greece, the strength of the men and
 horses was not impaired by the fatigues of a sea-
 voyage; and they distinguished their valour in the
 first sally against the besiegers. About the time of
 the summer solstice, Euthalius landed at Terracina
 with large sums of money for the payment of the
 troops: he cautiously proceeded along the Appian
 way, and this convoy entered Rome through the
 gate Capena⁹², while Belisarius, on the other
 side, diverted the attention of the Goths by a
 vigorous and successful skirmish. These season-
 able aids, the use and reputation of which were
 dextrously managed by the Roman general,
 revived the courage, or at least the hopes of the
 soldiers and people. The historian Procopius
 was dispatched with an important commission,
 to collect the troops and provisions which Cam-
 pania could furnish, or Constantinople had sent;
 and the secretary of Belisarius was soon followed
 by Antonina herself⁹³, who boldly traversed the
 posts of the enemy, and returned with the
 Oriental succours to the relief of her husband
 and the besieged city. A fleet of three thousand
 Isaurians cast anchor in the bay of Naples, and
 afterwards at Ostia. Above two thousand horse,
 of whom a part were Thracians, landed at Tar-

entum; and, after the junction of five hundred soldiers of Campania, and a train of waggons laden with wine and flour, they directed their march on the Appian way, from Capua to the neighbourhood of Rome. The forces that arrived by land and sea, were united at the mouth of the Tyber. Antonina convened a council of war: it was resolved to surmount, with sails and oars, the adverse stream of the river: and the Goths were apprehensive of disturbing, by any rash hostilities, the negociation to which Belisarius had craftily listened. They credulously believed, that they saw no more than the vanguard of a fleet and army, which already covered the Ionian sea and the plains of Campania; and the illusion was supported by the haughty language of the Roman general, when he gave audience to the ambassadors of Vitiges. After a specious discourse to vindicate the justice of his cause, they declared, that, for the sake of peace, they were disposed to renounce the possession of Sicily. "The emperor is not less generous," replied his lieutenant, with a disdainful smile, "in return for a gift which you no longer possess, he presents you with an ancient province of the empire; he resigns to the Goths the sovereignty of the British island." Belisarius rejected with equal firmness and contempt, the offer of a tribute; but he allowed the Gothic ambassadors to seek their fate from the mouth of Justinian himself; and consented, with seeming reluctance, to a truce of three months, from the winter solstice

C H A P. to the equinox of spring. Prudence might not
 XLI. safely trust either the oaths or hostages of the
 Barbarians, but the conscious superiority of the
 Roman chief was expressed in the distribution of
 his troops. As soon as fear or hunger compelled
 the Goths to evacuate Alba, Porto, and Centum-
 cellæ, their place was instantly supplied; the
 garrisons of Narni, Spoleto, and Perugia, were
 reinforced, and the seven camps of the besiegers
 were gradually encompassed with the calamities
 of a siege. The prayers and pilgrimage of Datius,
 bishop of Milan, were not without effect; and
 he obtained one thousand Thracians and Isau-
 rians, to assist the revolt of Liguria against her
 Arian tyrant. At the same time, John the San-
 guinary", the nephew of Vitalian, was detached
 with two thousand chosen horse, first to Alba
 on the Fucine lake, and afterwards to the fron-
 tiers of Picenum on the Hadriatic sea. "In that
 " province," said Belisarius, "the Goths have
 " deposited their families and treasures, without
 " a guard or the suspicion of danger. Doubtless,
 " they will violate the truce: let them feel your
 " presence, before they hear of your motions.
 " Spare the Italians; suffer not any fortified
 " places to remain hostile in your rear; and
 " faithfully reserve the spoil for an equal and
 " common partition. It would not be reasona-
 " ble," he added with a laugh, "that whilst we
 " are toiling to the destruction of the drones,
 " our more fortunate brethren should rise and
 " enjoy the honey."

Belisarius re-
 covers many
 cities of Italy.

The

The whole nation of the Ostrogoths had been assembled for the attack, and was almost entirely consumed in the siege, of Rome. If any credit be due to an intelligent spectator, one-third at least of their enormous host was destroyed, in frequent and bloody combats under the walls of the city. The bad fame and pernicious qualities of the summer air, might already be imputed to the decay of agriculture and population; and the evils of famine and pestilence were aggravated by their own licentiousness, and the unfriendly disposition of the country. While Vitiges struggled with his fortune; while he hesitated between shame and ruin; his retreat was hastened by domestic alarms. The king of the Goths was informed by trembling messengers, that John the Sanguinary spread the devastations of war from the Appenine to the Hadriatic; that the rich spoils and innumerable captives of Picenum were lodged in the fortifications of Rimini; and that this formidable chief had defeated his uncle, insulted his capital, and seduced, by secret correspondence, the fidelity of his wife, the imperious daughter of Amalasontha. Yet, before he retired, Vitiges made a last effort, either to storm or to surprise the city. A secret passage was discovered in one of the aqueducts; two citizens of the Vatican were tempted by bribes to intoxicate the guards of the Aurelian gate; an attack was meditated on the walls beyond the Tyber, in a place which was not fortified with towers; and the Barbarians advanced, with torches and scaling-ladders, to the assault of the Pina-

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XLI.

The Goths
raise the siege
of Rome;
A. D. 538;
March.

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XLI.

cian gate. But every attempt was defeated by the intrepid vigilance of Belisarius and his band of veterans, who, in the most perilous moments, did not regret the absence of their companions; and the Goths, alike destitute of hope and subsistence, clamorously urged their departure, before the truce should expire, and the Roman cavalry should again be united. One year and nine days after the commencement of the siege, an army, so lately strong and triumphant, burnt their tents, and tumultuously repassed the Milvian bridge. They repassed not with impunity: their thronging multitudes, oppressed in a narrow passage, were driven headlong into the Tyber, by their own fears and the pursuit of the enemy; and the Roman general, falling from the Pin-cian gate, inflicted a severe and disgraceful wound on their retreat. The slow length of a sickly and desponding host was heavily dragged along the Flaminian way; from whence the Barbarians were sometimes compelled to deviate, lest they should encounter the hostile garrisons that guarded the high road to Rimini and Ravenna. Yet so powerful was this flying army, that Vitiges spared ten thousand men for the defence of the cities which he was most solicitous to preserve and detached his nephew Uraias, with an adequate force, for the chastisement of rebellious Milan. At the head of his principal army, he besieged Rimini, only thirty-three miles distant from the Gothic capital. A feeble rampart, and a shallow ditch, were maintained by the skill and valour of John the Sanguinary, who shared the

danger and fatigue of the meanest soldier, and emulated, on a theatre less illustrious, the military virtues of his great commander. The towers and battering engines of the Barbarians were rendered useless; their attacks were repulsed; and the tedious blockade, which reduced the garrison to the last extremity of hunger, afforded time for the union and march of the Roman forces. A fleet which had surpris'd Ancona, sail'd along the coast of the Hadriatic, to the relief of the besieged city. The eunuch Narses landed in Picinum with two thousand Heruli and five thousand of the bravest troops of the East. The rock of the Appenine was forced; ten thousand veterans moved round the foot of the mountains, under the command of Belisarius himself; and a new army, whose encampment blazed with innumerable lights, *appeared* to advance along the Flaminian way. Overwhelmed with astonishment and despair, the Goths abandoned the siege of Rimini, their tents, their standards, and their leaders; and Vitiges, who gave or followed the example of flight, never halted till he found a shelter within the walls and morasses of Ravenna.

To these walls, and to some fortresses destitute of any mutual support, the Gothic monarchy was now reduced. The provinces of Italy had embraced the party of the emperor; and his army, gradually recruited to the number of twenty thousand men, must have atchieved an easy and rapid conquest, if their invincible powers had not been weakened by the discord of the Roman

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XLI.

Lose Rimini;

retire to Ravenna.

Jealousy of the Roman generals, A. D. 538.

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XLI.

Death of
Constantine.

chiefs. Before the end of the siege, an act of blood, ambiguous and indiscreet, sullied the fair fame of Belisarius. Presidius, a loyal Italian, as he fled from Ravenna to Rome, was rudely stopped by Constantine, the military governor of Spoleto, and despoiled, even in a church, of two daggers richly inlaid with gold and precious stones. As soon as the public danger had subsided, Presidius complained of the loss and injury: his complaint was heard, but the order of restitution was disobeyed by the pride and avarice of the offender. Exasperated by the delay, Presidius boldly arrested the general's horse as he passed through the forum, and with the spirit of a citizen, demanded the common benefit of the Roman laws. The honour of Belisarius was engaged; he summoned a council; claimed the obedience of his subordinate officer; and was provoked, by an insolent reply, to call hastily for the presence of his guards. Constantine, viewing their entrance as the signal of death, drew his sword, and rushed on the general, who nimbly eluded the stroke, and was protected by his friends; while the desperate assassin was disarmed, dragged into a neighbouring chamber, and executed, or rather murdered, by the guards, at the arbitrary command of Belisarius". In this hasty act of violence, the guilt of Constantine was no longer remembered; the despair and death of that valiant officer were secretly imputed to the revenge of Antonina; and each of his colleagues, conscious of the same rapine, was apprehensive of

the same fate. The fear of a common enemy suspended the effects of their envy and discontent; but in the confidence of approaching victory, they instigated a powerful rival to oppose the conqueror of Rome and Africa. From the domestic service of the palace, and the administration of the private revenue, Narses the eunuch was suddenly exalted to the head of an army; and the spirit of an hero, who afterwards equalled the merit and glory of Belisarius, served only to perplex the operations of the Gothic war. To his prudent counsels, the relief of Rimini was ascribed by the leaders of the discontented faction, who exhorted Narses to assume an independent and separate command. The epistle of Justinian had indeed enjoined his obedience to the general; but the dangerous exception, "as far as may be advantageous to the public service," reserved some freedom of judgment to the discreet favourite, who had so lately departed from the *sacred* and familiar conversation of his sovereign. In the exercise of this doubtful right, the eunuch perpetually dissented from the opinions of Belisarius; and, after yielding with reluctance to the siege of Urbino, he deserted his colleague in the night, and marched away to the conquest of the Æmilian province. The fierce and formidable bands of the Heruli were attached to the person of Narses⁹⁶; ten thousand Romans and confederates were persuaded to march under his banners; every male-content embraced the fair opportunity of revenging his private or imaginary wrongs; and the remain-

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XLI.

The eunuch
Narses.

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XLI.

Firmness and
authority of
Belisarius.

ing troops of Belisarius were divided and dispersed from the garrisons of Sicily to the shores of the Hadriatic. His skill and perseverance overcame every obstacle: Urbino was taken, the sieges of Fæsulæ, Orvieto, and Auximum, were undertaken and vigorously prosecuted; and the eunuch Narses was at length recalled to the domestic cares of the palace. All dissensions were healed, and all opposition was subdued by the temperate authority of the Roman general, to whom his enemies could not refuse their esteem; and Belisarius inculcated the salutary lesson, that the forces of the state should compose one body, and be animated by one soul. But in the interval of discord, the Goths were permitted to breathe; an important season was lost, Milan was destroyed, and the northern provinces of Italy were afflicted by an inundation of the Franks.

Invasion of
Italy by the
Franks,

A. D.

538, 539.

When Justinian first meditated the conquest of Italy, he sent ambassadors to the kings of the Franks, and adjured them, by the common ties of alliance and religion, to join in the holy enterprise against the Arians. The Goths, as their wants were more urgent, employed a more effectual mode of persuasion, and vainly strove, by the gift of lands and money, to purchase the friendship, or at least the neutrality, of a light and perfidious nation⁹⁷. But the arms of Belisarius, and the revolt of the Italians, had no sooner shaken the Gothic monarchy, than Theodebert of Austrasia, the most powerful and warlike of the Merovingian kings, was persuaded to suc-

cour their distress by an indirect and seasonable aid. Without expecting the consent of their sovereign, ten thousand Burgundians, his recent subjects, descended from the Alps, and joined the troops which Vitiges had sent to chastise the revolt of Milan. After an obstinate siege, the capital of Liguria was reduced by famine, but no capitulation could be obtained, except for the safe retreat of the Roman garrison. Datius, the orthodox bishop, who had seduced his countrymen to rebellion¹⁰⁰ and ruin, escaped to the luxury and honours of the Byzantine court¹⁰¹; but the clergy, perhaps the Arian clergy, were slaughtered at the foot of their own altars by the defenders of the Catholic faith. Three hundred thousand males were *reported* to be slain¹⁰²; the female sex, and the more precious spoil, was resigned to the Burgundians; and the houses, or at least the walls, of Milan were levelled with the ground. The Goths, in their last moments, were revenged by the destruction of a city, second only to Rome in size and opulence, in the splendour of its buildings, or the number of its inhabitants; and Belisarius sympathized alone in the fate of his deserted and devoted friends. Encouraged by this successful inroad, Theodebert himself, in the ensuing spring, invaded the plains of Italy with an army of one hundred thousand Barbarians¹⁰³. The king, and some chosen followers, were mounted on horseback, and armed with lances: the infantry, without bows or spears, were satisfied with a shield, a sword, and a double-edged battle-axe,

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XLI.

Destruction
of Milan.

CHAP. which, in their hands, became a deadly and unerring weapon. Italy trembled at the march of the Franks; and both the Gothic prince and the Roman general, alike ignorant of their designs, solicited, with hope and terror, the friendship of these dangerous allies. Till he had secured the passage of the Po on the bridge of Pavia, the grandson of Clovis dissembled his intentions, which he at length declared, by assaulting, almost at the same instant, the hostile camps of the Romans and Goths. Instead of uniting their arms, they fled with equal precipitation; and the fertile, though desolate provinces of Liguria and Æmilia, were abandoned to a licentious host of Barbarians, whose rage was not mitigated by any thoughts of settlement or conquest. Among the cities which they ruined, Genoa, not yet constructed of marble, is particularly enumerated: and the deaths of thousands, according to the regular practice of war, appear to have excited less horror than some idolatrous sacrifices of women and children, which were performed with impunity in the camp of the most Christian king. If it were not a melancholy truth, that the first and most cruel sufferings must be the lot of the innocent and helpless, history might exult in the misery of the conquerors, who, in the midst of riches, were left destitute of bread or wine, reduced to drink the waters of the Po, and to feed on the flesh of distempered cattle. The dysentery swept away one-third of their army; and the clamours of his subjects, who were impatient to pass the Alps, disposed Theodebert

to listen with respect to the mild exhortations of Belisarius. The memory of this inglorious and destructive warfare was perpetuated on the medals of Gaul; and Justinian, without unsheathing his sword, assumed the title of conqueror of the Franks. The Merovingian prince was offended by the vanity of the emperor; he affected to pity the fallen fortunes of the Goths; and his insidious offer of a federal union was fortified by the promise or menace of descending from the Alps at the head of five hundred thousand men. His plans of conquest werẽ boundless and perhaps chimerical. The king of Austrasia threatened to chastise Justinian, and to march to the gates of Constantinople ¹⁰²: he was overthrown and slain ¹⁰³ by a wild bull ¹⁰⁴, as he hunted in the Belgic or German forests.

As soon as Belisarius was delivered from his foreign and domestic enemies, he seriously applied his forces to the final reduction of Italy. In the siege of Osimo, the general was nearly transpierced with an arrow, if the mortal stroke had not been intercepted by one of his guards, who lost, in that pious office, the use of his hand. The Goths of Osimo, four thousand warriors, with those of Fæsulæ and the Cottian Alps, were among the last who maintained their independence; and their gallant resistance, which almost tired the patience, deserved the esteem, of the conqueror. His prudence refused to subscribe the safe conduct which they asked, to join their brethren of Ravenna; but they saved, by an honourable capitulation, one moiety at least of their wealth, with

Belisarius
besieges Ra-
venna;

C H A P. the free alternative of retiring peaceably to their
 XLII. estates, or enlisting to serve the emperor in his
 Persian wars. The multitudes which yet adhered
 to the standard of Vitiges, far surpassed the num-
 ber of the Roman troops; but neither prayers,
 nor defiance, nor the extreme danger of his most
 faithful subjects, could tempt the Gothic king
 beyond the fortifications of Ravenna. These for-
 tifications were, indeed, impregnable to the
 assaults of art or violence; and when Belisarius
 invested the capital, he was soon convinced that
 famine only could tame the stubborn spirit of
 the Barbarians. The sea, the land, and the chan-
 nels of the Po, were guarded by the vigilance
 of the Roman general; and his morality extend-
 ed the rights of war to the practice of poisoning
 the waters ¹⁰⁵, and secretly firing the grana-
 ries ¹⁰⁶ of a besieged city ¹⁰⁷. While he pressed
 the blockade of Ravenna, he was surprised by
 the arrival of two ambassadors from Constantino-
 ple, with a treaty of peace, which Justinian had
 imprudently signed, without deigning to consult
 the author of his victory. By this disgraceful
 and precarious agreement, Italy and the Gothic
 treasure were divided, and the provinces beyond
 the Po were left with the regal title to the suc-
 cessor of Theodoric. The ambassadors were
 eager to accomplish their salutary commission;
 the captive Vitiges accepted, with transport, the
 unexpected offer of a crown; honour was less
 prevalent among the Goths, than the want and
 appetite of food; and the Roman chiefs, who

murmured at the continuance of the war, professed implicit submission to the commands of the emperor. If Belisarius had possessed only the courage of a foldier, the laurel would have been snatched from his hand by timid and envious counfels; but in this decisive moment, he resolved, with the magnanimity of a statesman, to sustain alone the danger and merit of generous disobedience. Each of his officers gave a written opinion, that the siege of Ravenna was impracticable and hopeless: the general then rejected the treaty of partition, and declared his own resolution of leading Vitiges in chains to the feet of Justinian. The Goths retired with doubt and dismay: this peremptory refusal deprived them of the only signature which they could trust, and filled their minds with a just apprehension, that a sagacious enemy had discovered the full extent of their deplorable state. They compared the fame and fortune of Belisarius with the weakness of their ill-fated king; and the comparison suggested an extraordinary project to which Vitiges, with apparent resignation, was compelled to acquiesce. Partition would ruin the strength, exile would disgrace the honour, of the nation; but they offered their arms, their treasures, and the fortifications of Ravenna, if Belisarius would disclaim the authority of a master, accept the choice of the Goths, and assume, as he had deserved, the kingdom of Italy. If the false lustre of a diadem could have tempted the loyalty of a faithful subject, his prudence must have foreseen

CHAP.
XLI.

subdues the
Gothic king-
dom of Italy,
A. D. 539,
December.

the inconstancy of the Barbarians, and his rational ambition would prefer the safe and honourable station of a Roman general. Even the patience and seeming satisfaction with which he entertained a proposal of treason, might be susceptible of a malignant interpretation. But the lieutenant of Justinian was conscious of his own rectitude; he entered into a dark and crooked path, as it might lead to the voluntary submission of the Goths; and his dextrous policy persuaded them that he was disposed to comply with their wishes, without engaging an oath or a promise for the performance of a treaty which he secretly abhorred. The day of the surrender of Ravenna was stipulated by the Gothic ambassadors: a fleet laden with provisions, sailed as a welcome guest into the deepest recess of the harbour: the gates were opened to the fancied king of Italy; and Belisarius, without meeting an enemy, triumphantly marched through the streets of an impregnable city¹⁰⁸. The Romans were astonished by their success; the multitudes of tall and robust Barbarians were confounded by the image of their own patience; and the masculine females, spitting in the faces of their sons and husbands, most bitterly reproached them for betraying their dominion and freedom to these pygmies of the south, contemptible in their numbers, diminutive in their stature. Before the Goths could recover from the first surprise, and claim the accomplishment of their doubtful hopes, the victor established his power in Ravenna,

beyond the danger of repentance and revolt. CHAP.
 Vitiges, who perhaps had attempted to escape, XLI.
 was honourably guarded in his palace¹⁰⁹; the Captivity of
 flower of the Gothic youth was selected for the Vitiges.
 service of the emperor; the remainder of the
 people was dismissed to their peaceful habitations
 in the southern provinces; and a colony of Ita-
 lians was invited to replenish the depopulated
 city. The submission of the capital was imitated
 in the towns and villages of Italy, which had
 not been subdued, or even visited by the Ro-
 mans; and the independent Goths who remained
 in arms at Pavia and Verona, were ambitious
 only to become the subjects of Belisarius. But
 his inflexible loyalty rejected, except as the sub-
 stitute of Justinian, their oaths of allegiance;
 and he was not offended by the reproach of their
 deputies, that he rather chose to be a slave than
 a king.

After the second victory of Belisarius, envy Return and
 again whispered, Justinian listened, and the hero glory of Beli-
 was recalled. "The remnant of the Gothic war farius,
 " was no longer worthy of his presence: a gra- A. D. 549,
 " cious sovereign was impatient to reward his &c.
 " services, and to consult his wisdom; and he
 " alone was capable of defending the East against
 " the innumerable armies of Persia." Belisarius
 understood the suspicion, accepted the excuse,
 embarked at Ravenna his spoils and trophies;
 and proved, by his ready obedience, that such
 an abrupt removal from the government of Italy
 was not less unjust than it might have been in-

CHAP. XLII. discreet. The emperor received with honourable courtesy, both Vitiges and his more noble consort: and as the king of the Goths conformed to the Athanasian faith, he obtained, with a rich inheritance of lands in Asia, the rank of senator and patrician¹¹⁰. Every spectator admired, without peril, the strength and stature of the young Barbarians: they adored the majesty of the throne, and promised to shed their blood in the service of their benefactor. Justinian deposited in the Byzantine palace the treasures of the Gothic monarchy. A flattering senate was sometimes admitted to gaze on the magnificent spectacle; but it was enviously secluded from the public view; and the conqueror of Italy renounced, without a murmur, perhaps without a sigh, the well-earned honours of a second triumph. His glory was indeed exalted above all external pomp; and the faint and hollow praises of the court were supplied, even in a servile age, by the respect and admiration of his country. Whenever he appeared in the streets and public places of Constantinople, Belisarius attracted and satisfied the eyes of the people. His lofty stature and majestic countenance fulfilled their expectations of an hero; the meanest of his fellow-citizens were emboldened by his gentle and gracious demeanour; and the martial train which attended his footsteps, left his person more accessible than in a day of battle. Seven thousand horsemen, matchless for beauty and valour, were maintained in the service, and at the private expence of the

general ^{III}. Their prowess was always conspicuous in single combats, or in the foremost ranks; and both parties confessed, that in the siege of Rome, the guards of Belisarius had alone vanquished the Barbarian host. Their numbers were continually augmented by the bravest and most faithful of the enemy; and his fortunate captives, the Vandals, the Moors, and the Goths, emulated the attachment of his domestic followers. By the union of liberality and justice, he acquired the love of the soldiers, without alienating the affections of the people. The sick and wounded were relieved with medicines and money; and still more efficaciously, by the healing visits and smiles of their commander. The loss of a weapon or an horse was instantly repaired, and each deed of valour was rewarded by the rich and honourable gifts of a bracelet or a collar, which were rendered more precious by the judgment of Belisarius. He was endeared to the husbandmen, by the peace and plenty which they enjoyed under the shadow of his standard. Instead of being injured, the country was enriched by the march of the Roman armies; and such was the rigid discipline of their camp, that not an apple was gathered from the tree, not a path could be traced in the fields of corn. Belisarius was chaste and sober. In the licence of a military life, none could boast that they had seen him intoxicated with wine: the most beautiful captives of Gothic or Vandal race were offered to his embraces; but he turned aside from their

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charms, and the husband of Antonina was never suspected of violating the laws of conjugal fidelity. The spectator and historian of his exploits has observed, that amidst the perils of war, he was daring without rashness, prudent without fear, slow or rapid according to the exigences of the moment; that in the deepest distress, he was animated by real or apparent hope, but that he was modest and humble in the most prosperous fortune. By these virtues, he equalled or excelled the ancient masters of the military art. Victory, by sea and land, attended his arms. He subdued Africa, Italy, and the adjacent islands; led away captives the successors of Genferic and Theodoric; filled Constantinople with the spoils of their palaces, and in the space of six years recovered half the provinces of the Western empire. In his fame and merit, in wealth and power, he remained, without a rival, the first of the Roman subjects: the voice of envy could only magnify his dangerous importance; and the emperor might applaud his own discerning spirit, which had discovered and raised the genius of Belisarius.

Secret history
of his wife
Antonina.

It was the custom of the Roman triumphs, that a slave should be placed behind the chariot to remind the conqueror of the instability of fortune, and the infirmities of human nature. Procopius, in his anecdotes, has assumed that servile and ungrateful office. The generous reader may cast away the libel, but the evidence of facts will adhere to his memory; and he will reluctantly

reluctantly confess, that the fame, and even the virtue of Belisarius, were polluted by the lust and cruelty of his wife; and that the hero deserved an appellation which may not drop from the pen of the decent historian. The mother of Antonina ¹¹² was a theatrical prostitute, and both her father and grand-father exercised at Thessalonica and Constantinople, the vile, though lucrative, profession of charioteers. In the various situations of their fortune, she became the companion, the enemy, the servant, and the favourite of the empress Theodora: these loose and ambitious females had been connected by similar pleasures, they were separated by the jealousy of vice, and at length reconciled by the partnership of guilt. Before her marriage with Belisarius, Antonina had one husband and many lovers; Photius, the son of her former nuptials, was of an age to distinguish himself at the siege of Naples; and it was not till the autumn of her age and beauty ¹¹³ that she indulged a scandalous attachment to a Thracian youth. Theodosius ^{Her lover} had been educated in the Eunomian heresy; the ^{Theodosius.} African voyage was consecrated by the baptism and auspicious name of the first soldier who embarked; and the proselyte was adopted into the family of his spiritual parents ¹¹⁴, Belisarius and Antonina. Before they touched the shores of Africa, this holy kindred degenerated into sensual love; and as Antonina soon overleaped the bounds of modesty and caution, the Roman general was alone ignorant of his own dishonour.

C H A P. XLII. During their residence at Carthage, he surprised the two lovers in a subterraneous chamber, solitary, warm, and almost naked. Anger flashed from his eyes. "With the help of this young man," said the unblushing Antonina, "I was secreting our most precious effects from the knowledge of Justinian." The youth resumed his garments, and the pious husband consented to disbelieve the evidence of his own senses. From this pleasing and perhaps voluntary delusion, Belisarius was awakened at Syracuse, by the officious information of Macedonia: and that female attendant, after requiring an oath for her security, produced two chamberlains, who, like herself, had often beheld the adulteries of Antonina. An hasty flight into Asia saved Theodosius from the justice of an injured husband, who had signified to one of his guards the order of his death; but the tears of Antonina, and her artful seductions, assured the credulous hero of her innocence; and he stooped, against his faith and judgment, to abandon those imprudent friends who had presumed to accuse or doubt the chastity of his wife. The revenge of a guilty woman is implacable and bloody: the unfortunate Macedonia, with the two witnesses, were secretly arrested by the minister of her cruelty; their tongues were cut out, their bodies were hacked into small pieces, and their remains were cast into the sea of Syracuse. A rash, though judicious saying of Constantine; "I would sooner have punished the adulteress than the

“boy,” was deeply remembered by Antonina; and two years afterwards, when despair had armed that officer against his general, her sanguinary advice decided and hastened his execution. Even the indignation of Photius was not forgiven by his mother; the exile of her son prepared the recal of her lover; and Theodosius condescended to accept the pressing and humble invitation of the conqueror of Italy. In the absolute direction of his household, and in the important commissions of peace and war¹¹, the favourite youth most rapidly acquired a fortune of four hundred thousand pounds sterling: and after their return to Constantinople, the passion of Antonina, at least, continued ardent and unabated. But fear, devotion, and lassitude perhaps, inspired Theodosius with more serious thoughts. He dreaded the busy scandal of the capital, and the indiscreet fondness of the wife of Belisarius; escaped from her embraces, and retiring to Ephesus, shaved his head, and took refuge in the sanctuary of a monastic life. The despair of the new Ariadne could scarcely have been excused by the death of her husband. She wept, she tore her hair, she filled the palace with her cries; “she had lost the dearest of friends, a tender, a faithful, a laborious friend!” But her warm entreaties, fortified by the prayers of Belisarius, were insufficient to draw the holy monk from the solitude of Ephesus. It was not till the general moved forward for the Persian war, that Theodosius could be tempted to return to Constantinople; and the

C H A P.
XLI.

C H A P. short interval before the departure of Antonina
XLI. herself was boldly devoted to love and pleasure.

Repentment
of Belisarius
and her son
Photius.

A philosopher may pity and forgive the infirmities of female nature, from which he receives no real injury; but contemptible is the husband who feels, and yet endures, his own infamy in that of his wife. Antonina pursued her son with implacable hatred; and the gallant Photius¹¹⁶ was exposed to her secret persecutions in the camp beyond the Tigris. Enraged by his own wrongs, and by the dishonour of his blood, he cast away in his turn the sentiments of nature, and revealed to Belisarius the turpitude of a woman who had violated all the duties of a mother and a wife. From the surprise and indignation of the Roman general, his former credulity appears to have been sincere: he embraced the knees of the son of Antonina, adjured him to remember his obligations rather than his birth, and confirmed at the altar their holy vows of revenge and mutual defence. The dominion of Antonina was impaired by absence; and when she met her husband, on his return from the Persian confines, Belisarius, in his first and transient emotions, confined her person and threatened her life. Photius was more resolved to punish, and less prompt to pardon: he flew to Ephesus; extorted from a trusty eunuch of his mother the full confession of her guilt; arrested Theodosius and his treasures in the church of St. John the Apostle, and concealed his captives, whose exe-

cution was only delayed, in a secure and sequestered fortress of Cilicia. Such a daring outrage against public justice could not pass with impunity; and the cause of Antonina was espoused by the empress, whose favour she had deserved by the recent services of the disgrace of a præfect, and the exile and murder of a pope. At the end of the campaign, Belisarius was recalled: he complied, as usual, with the Imperial mandate. His mind was not prepared for rebellion: his obedience, however adverse to the dictates of honour, was consonant to the wishes of his heart; and when he embraced his wife, at the command, and perhaps in the presence, of the empress, the tender husband was disposed to forgive or to be forgiven. The bounty of Theodora reserved for her companion a more precious favour. "I have found," she said, "my dearest patrician, a pearl of inestimable value: it has not yet been viewed by any mortal eye; but the sight and the possession of this jewel are destined for my friend." As soon as the curiosity and impatience of Antonina were kindled, the door of a bedchamber was thrown open, and she beheld her lover, whom the diligence of the eunuchs had discovered in his secret prison. Her silent wonder burst into passionate exclamations of gratitude and joy, and she named Theodora her queen, her benefactress, and her saviour. The monk of Ephesus was nourished in the palace with luxury and ambition; but instead of assuming, as he was promised, the com-

C H A P.

XII.

Persecution
of her son.

mand of the Roman armies, Theodosius expired in the first fatigues of an amorous interview. The grief of Antonina could only be assuaged by the sufferings of her son. A youth of consular rank, and a sickly constitution, was punished, without a trial, like a malefactor and a slave: yet such was the constancy of his mind, that Photius sustained the tortures of the scourge and the rack, without violating the faith which he had sworn to Belisarius. After this fruitless cruelty, the son of Antonina, while his mother feasted with the empress, was buried in her subterraneous prisons, which admitted not the distinction of night and day. He twice escaped to the most venerable sanctuaries of Constantinople, the churches of S. Sophia and of the Virgin: but his tyrants were insensible of religion and of pity; and the helpless youth, amidst the clamours of the clergy and people, was twice dragged from the altar to the dungeon. His third attempt was more successful. At the end of three years, the prophet Zachariah, or some mortal friend, indicated the means of an escape: he eluded the spies and guards of the empress, reached the holy sepulchre of Jerusalem, embraced the profession of a monk; and the abbot Photius was employed, after the death of Justinian, to reconcile and regulate the churches of Egypt. The son of Antonina suffered all that an enemy can inflict: her patient husband imposed on himself the more exquisite misery of violating his promise and deserting his friend.

Disgrace and

In the succeeding campaign, Belisarius was again

sent against the Persians: he saved the East, but he offended Theodora, and perhaps the emperor himself. The malady of Justinian had countenanced the rumour of his death; and the Roman general, on the supposition of that probable event, spoke the free language of a citizen and a soldier. His colleague Buzes, who concurred in the same sentiments, lost his rank, his liberty, and his health, by the persecution of the empress: but the disgrace of Belisarius was alleviated by the dignity of his own character, and the influence of his wife, who might wish to humble, but could not desire to ruin the partner of her fortunes. Even his removal was coloured by the assurance, that the sinking state of Italy would be retrieved by the single presence of its conqueror. But no sooner had he returned, alone and defenceless, than an hostile commission was sent to the East, to seize his treasures and criminate his actions; the guards and veterans who followed his private banner, were distributed among the chiefs of the army, and even the eunuchs presumed to cast lots for the partition of his martial domestics. When he passed with a small and fordid retinue through the streets of Constantinople, his forlorn appearance excited the amazement and compassion of the people. Justinian and Theodora received him with cold ingratitude; the servile crowd, with insolence and contempt; and in the evening he retired with trembling steps to his deserted palace. An indisposition, feigned or real, had confined Antonina to her apartment: and she

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Belisarius.

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walked disdainfully silent in the adjacent portico, while Belisarius threw himself on his bed, and expected, in an agony of grief and terror, the death which he had so often braved under the walls of Rome. Long after sun-set, a messenger was announced from the empress; he opened with anxious curiosity the letter which contained the sentence of his fate. “You cannot be ignorant how much you have deserved my displeasure. I am not insensible of the services of Antonina. To her merits and intercession I have granted your life, and permit you to retain a part of your treasures, which might be justly forfeited to the state. Let your gratitude, where it is due, be displayed, not in words, but in your future behaviour.” I know not how to believe or to relate the transports with which the hero is said to have received this ignominious pardon. He fell prostrate before his wife, he kissed the feet of his saviour, and he devoutly promised to live the grateful and submissive slave of Antonina. A fine of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling was levied on the fortunes of Belisarius, and with the office of count, or master of the royal stables, he accepted the conduct of the Italian war. At his departure from Constantinople, his friends, and even the public, were persuaded, that as soon as he regained his freedom, he would renounce his dissimulation, and that his wife, Theodora, and perhaps the emperor him-

self, would be sacrificed to the just revenge of a virtuous rebel. Their hopes were deceived; and the unconquerable patience and loyalty of Belisarius appear either *below* or *above* the character of a MAN ¹¹⁷.

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State of the Barbaric World.—Establishment of the Lombards on the Danube.—Tribes and Inroads of the Slavonians.—Origin, Empire, and Embassies of the Turks.—The Flight of the Avars—Chosroes I. or Nushirvan King of Persia.—His prosperous Reign and Wars with the Romans.—The Colchian or Lazic War.—The Æthiopians.

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Weakness of
the empire of
Justinian,

A. D.

527—565.

OUR estimate of personal merit is relative to the common faculties of mankind. The aspiring efforts of genius, or virtue, either in active or speculative life, are measured, not so much by their real elevation, as by the height to which they ascend above the level of their age or country: and the same stature, which in a people of giants would pass unnoticed, must appear conspicuous in a race of pygmies. Leonidas, and his three hundred companions, devoted their lives at Thermopylæ; but the education of the infant, the boy, and the man, had prepared, and almost ensured this memorable sacrifice; and each Spartan would approve, rather than admire, an act of duty, of which himself and eight thousand of his fellow-citizens were equally capable¹. The

great Pompey might inscribe on his trophies, that he had defeated in battle two millions of enemies, and reduced fifteen hundred cities from the lake Mæotis to the Red Sea²: but the fortune of Rome flew before his eagles; the nations were oppressed by their own fears, and the invincible legions which he commanded, had been formed by the habits of conquest and the discipline of ages. In this view, the character of Belisarius may be deservedly placed above the heroes of the ancient republics. His imperfections flowed from the contagion of the times; his virtues were his own, the free gift of nature or reflection; he raised himself without a master or a rival; and so inadequate were the arms committed to his hand, that his sole advantage was derived from the pride and presumption of his adversaries. Under his command, the subjects of Justinian often deserved to be called Romans: but the unwarlike appellation of Greeks was imposed as a term of reproach by the haughty Goths; who affected to blush, that they must dispute the kingdom of Italy with a nation of tragedians, pantomimes, and pirates³. The climate of Asia has indeed been found less congenial than that of Europe, to military spirit: those populous countries were enervated by luxury, despotism, and superstition; and the monks were more expensive and more numerous than the soldiers of the East. The regular force of the empire had once amounted to six hundred and forty-five thousand men: it was reduced, in the time of Justinian, to one

CHAP. XLII. hundred and fifty thousand; and this number, large as it may seem, was thinly scattered over the sea and land; in Spain and Italy, in Africa and Egypt, on the banks of the Danube, the coast of the Euxine, and the frontiers of Persia. The citizen was exhausted, yet the soldier was unpaid; his poverty was mischievously soothed by the privilege of rapine and indolence; and the tardy payments were detained and intercepted by the fraud of those agents who usurp, without courage or danger, the emoluments of war. Public and private distresses recruited the armies of the state; but in the field, and still more in the presence of the enemy, their numbers were always defective. The want of national spirit was supplied by the precarious faith and disorderly service of Barbarian mercenaries. Even military honour, which has often survived the loss of virtue and freedom, was almost totally extinct. The generals, who were multiplied beyond the example of former times, laboured only to prevent the success, or to sully the reputation, of their colleagues; and they had been taught by experience, that if merit sometimes provoked the jealousy, error, or even guilt, would obtain the indulgence, of a gracious emperor *. In such an age, the triumphs of Belisarius, and afterwards of Narses, shine with incomparable lustre; but they are encompassed with the darkest shades of disgrace and calamity. While the lieutenant of Justinian subdued the kingdoms of the Goths and Vandals, the emperor ', timid, though ambitious, balan-

ced the forces of the Barbarians, fomented their divisions by flattery and falsehood, and invited by his patience and liberality the repetition of injuries. The keys of Carthage, Rome, and Ravenna, were presented to their conqueror, while Antioch was destroyed by the Persians, and Justinian trembled for the safety of Constantinople.

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Even the Gothic victories of Belisarius were prejudicial to the state, since they abolished the important barrier of the Upper Danube, which had been so faithfully guarded by Theodoric and his daughter. For the defence of Italy, the Goths evacuated Pannonia and Noricum, which they left in a peaceful and flourishing condition: the sovereignty was claimed by the emperor of the Romans; the actual possession was abandoned to the boldness of the first invader. On the opposite banks of the Danube, the plains of Upper Hungary and the Transylvanian hills were possessed, since the death of Attila, by the tribes of the Gepidæ, who respected the Gothic arms, and despised, not indeed the gold of the Romans, but the secret motive of their annual subsidies. The vacant fortifications of the river were instantly occupied by these Barbarians: their standards were planted on the walls of Sir- mium and Belgrade; and the ironical tone of their apology aggravated this insult on the majesty of the empire. "So extensive, O Cæsar, "are your dominions; so numerous are your "cities; that you are continually seeking for na-

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Barbarians.

The Gepidæ.

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“ tions to whom, either in peace or war, you
“ may relinquish these useless possessions. The
“ Gepidæ are your brave and faithful allies; and
“ if they have anticipated your gifts, they have
“ shewn a just confidence in your bounty.”

Their presumption was excused by the mode of revenge which Justinian embraced. Instead of asserting the rights of a sovereign for the protection of his subjects, the emperor invited a strange people to invade and possess the Roman provinces between the Danube and the Alps; and the ambition of the Gepidæ was checked by the rising power and fame of the LOMBARDS⁷. This corrupt appellation has been diffused in the thirteenth century by the merchants and bankers, the Italian posterity of these savage warriors: but the original name of *Langobards* is expressive only of the peculiar length and fashion of their beards. I am not disposed either to question or to justify their Scandinavian origin⁸; nor to pursue the migrations of the Lombards through unknown regions and marvelous adventures. About the time of Augustus and Trajan, a ray of historic light breaks on the darkness of their antiquities, and they are discovered, for the first time, between the Elbe and the Oder. Fierce, beyond the example of the Germans, they delighted to propagate the tremendous belief, that their heads were formed like the heads of dogs, and that they drank the blood of their enemies whom they vanquished in battle. The smallness of their numbers was recruited by the adoption of their

The Lom-
bards.

bravest slaves; and alone, amidst their powerful neighbours, they defended by arms their high-spirited independence. In the tempests of the north, which overwhelmed so many names and nations, this little bark of the Lombards still floated on the surface: they gradually descended towards the south and the Danube; and at the end of four hundred years they again appear with their ancient valour and renown. Their manners were not less ferocious. The assassination of a royal guest was executed in the presence, and by the command, of the king's daughter, who had been provoked by some words of insult, and disappointed by his diminutive stature; and a tribute, the price of blood, was imposed on the Lombards, by his brother, the king of the Heruli. Adversity revived a sense of moderation and justice, and the insolence of conquest was chastised by the signal defeat and irreparable dispersion of the Heruli, who were seated in the southern provinces of Poland'. The victories of the Lombards recommended them to the friendship of the emperors: and at the solicitation of Justinian, they passed the Danube, to reduce, according to their treaty, the cities of Noricum and the fortresses of Pannonia. But the spirit of rapine soon tempted them beyond these ample limits; they wandered along the coast of the Hadriatic as far as Dyrrachium, and presumed, with familiar rudeness, to enter the towns and houses of their Roman allies, and to seize the captives who had escaped from their audacious hands. These acts

CHAP. of hostility, the fallies, as it might be pretended,
 XLII. of some loose adventurers, were disowned by the nation, and excused by the emperor; but the arms of the Lombards were more seriously engaged by a contest of thirty years, which was terminated only by the extirpation of the Gepidæ. The hostile nations often pleaded their cause before the throne of Constantinople; and the crafty Justinian, to whom the Barbarians were almost equally odious, pronounced a partial and ambiguous sentence, and dextrously protracted the war by slow and ineffectual succours. Their strength was formidable, since the Lombards, who sent into the field several *myriads* of soldiers, still claimed, as the weaker side, the protection of the Romans. Their spirit was intrepid; yet such is the uncertainty of courage, that the two armies were suddenly struck with a panic; they fled from each other, and the rival kings remained with their guards in the midst of an empty plain. A short truce was obtained; but their mutual resentment again kindled; and the remembrance of their shame rendered the next encounter more desperate and bloody. Forty thousand of the Barbarians perished in the decisive battle, which broke the power of the Gepidæ, transferred the fears and wishes of Justinian, and first displayed the character of Alboin, the youthful prince of the Lombards, and the future conqueror of Italy^{1°}.

The Sclavonians.

The wild people who dwelt or wandered in the plains of Russia, Lithuania, and Poland, might

might be reduced, in the age of Justinian, under the two great families of the BULGARIANS¹¹ and the SCLAVONIANS. According to the Greek writers, the former, who touched the Euxine and the lake Mæotis, derived from the Huns their name or descent; and it is needless to renew the simple and well-known picture of Tartar-manners. They were bold and dextrous archers, who drank the milk, and feasted on the flesh of their fleet and indefatigable horses; whose flocks and herds followed, or rather guided the motions of their roving camps; to whose inroads no country was remote or impervious, and who were practised in flight, though incapable of fear. The nation was divided into two powerful and hostile tribes, who pursued each other with fraternal hatred. They eagerly disputed the friendship or rather the gifts of the emperor; and the distinction which nature had fixed between the faithful dog and the rapacious wolf, was applied by an ambassador who received only verbal instructions from the mouth of his illiterate prince¹². The Bulgarians, of whatsoever species, were equally attracted by Roman wealth: they assumed a vague dominion over the Sclavonian name, and their rapid marches could only be stopped by the Baltic sea, or the extreme cold and poverty of the north. But the same race of Sclavonians appears to have maintained, in every age, the possession of the same countries. Their numerous tribes, however distant or adverse, used one common language (it was harsh and irregular), and were known

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by the resemblance of their form, which deviated from the swarthy Tartar, and approached without attaining, the lofty stature and fair complexion of the German. Four thousand six hundred villages¹³ were scattered over the provinces of Russia and Poland, and their huts were hastily built of rough timber, in a country deficient both in stone and iron. Erected, or rather concealed in the depth of forests, on the banks of rivers, or the edge of morasses, we may not perhaps, without flattery, compare them to the architecture of the beaver; which they resembled in a double issue, to the land and water, for the escape of the savage inhabitant, an animal less clean, less diligent, and less social than that marvellous quadrupede. The fertility of the soil, rather than the labour of the natives, supplied the rustic plenty of the Slavonians. Their sheep and horned cattle were large and numerous, and the fields which they sowed with millet and panic¹⁴, afforded, in the place of bread, a coarse and less nutritive food. The incessant rapine of their neighbours compelled them to bury this treasure in the earth; but on the appearance of a stranger, it was freely imparted by a people, whose unfavourable character is qualified by the epithets of chaste, patient and hospitable. As their supreme god, they adored an invisible master of the thunder. The rivers and the nymphs obtained their subordinate honours, and the popular worship was expressed in vows and sacrifice. The Slavonians disdained to obey a despot,

a prince, or even a magistrate; but their experience was too narrow, their passions too headstrong, to compose a system of equal law or general defence. Some voluntary respect was yielded to age and valour; but each tribe or village existed as a separate republic, and all must be persuaded where none could be compelled. They fought on foot, almost naked, and, except an unwieldy shield, without any defensive armour: their weapons of offence were a bow, a quiver of small poisoned arrows, and a long rope, which they dextrously threw from a distance, and entangled their enemy in a running noose. In the field, the Slavonian infantry was dangerous by their speed, agility, and hardiness: they swam, they dived, they remained under water, drawing their breath through a hollow cane; and a river or lake was often the scene of their unsuspected ambuscade. But these were the achievements of spies or stragglers; the military art was unknown to the Slavonians; their name was obscure, and their conquests were inglorious¹⁵. I have marked the faint and general outline of the Slavonians and Bulgarians, without attempting to define their intermediate boundaries, which were not accurately known or respected by the Barbarians themselves. Their importance was measured by their vicinity to the empire; and the level country of Moldavia and Walachia was occupied by the Antes¹⁶, a Slavonian tribe, which swelled the titles of Justinian with an epithet of conquest¹⁷.

Their in-
roads.

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Against the Antes he erected the fortifications of the lower Danube; and laboured to secure the alliance of a people seated in the direct channel of northern inundation, an interval of two hundred miles between the mountains of Transylvania and the Euxine sea. But the Antes wanted power and inclination to stem the fury of the torrent: and the light-armed Slavonians, from an hundred tribes, pursued with almost equal speed the footsteps of the Bulgarian horse. The payment of one piece of gold for each soldier, procured a safe and easy retreat through the country of the Gepidæ, who commanded the passage of the upper Danube¹⁸. The hopes or fears of the Barbarians; their intestine union or discord; the accident of a frozen or shallow stream; the prospect of harvest or vintage; the prosperity or distress of the Romans; were the causes which produced the uniform repetition of annual visits¹⁹, tedious in the narrative, and destructive in the event. The same year, and possibly the same month, in which Ravenna surrendered, was marked by an invasion of the Huns or Bulgarians, so dreadful, that it almost effaced the memory of their past inroads. They spread from the suburbs of Constantinople to the Ionian gulf, destroyed thirty-two cities or castles, razed Potidæa, which Athens had built and Philip had besieged, and repassed the Danube, dragging at their horses heels one hundred and twenty thousand of the subjects of Justinian. In a subsequent

inroad they pierced the wall of the Thracian Chersonesus, extirpated the habitations and the inhabitants, boldly traversed the Hellespont, and returned to their companions, laden with the spoils of Asia. Another party, which seemed a multitude in the eyes of the Romans, penetrated, without opposition, from the streights of Thermopylæ to the isthmus of Corinth; and the last ruin of Greece has appeared an object too minute for the attention of history. The works which the emperor raised for the protection, but at the expence, of his subjects, served only to disclose the weakness of some neglected part; and the walls, which by flattery had been deemed impregnable, were either deserted by the garrison, or scaled by the Barbarians. Three thousand Slavonians, who insolently divided themselves into two bands, discovered the weakness and misery of a triumphant reign. They passed the Danube and the Hebrus, vanquished the Roman generals who dared to oppose their progress, and plundered with impunity, the cities of Illyricum and Thrace, each of which had arms and numbers to overwhelm their contemptible assailants. Whatever praise the boldness of the Slavonians may deserve, it is sullied by the wanton and deliberate cruelty which they are accused of exercising on their prisoners. Without distinction of rank, or age, or sex, the captives were impaled or flayed alive, or suspended between four posts, and beaten with clubs till they expired, or inclosed in some

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spacious building, and left to perish in the flames with the spoil and cattle which might impede the march of these savage victors²⁰. Perhaps a more impartial narrative would reduce the number, and qualify the nature of these horrid acts; and they might sometimes be excused by the cruel laws of retaliation. In the siege of Topirus²¹, whose obstinate defence had enraged the Sclavonians, they massacred fifteen thousand males; but they spared the women and children; the most valuable captives were always reserved for labour or ransom; the servitude was not rigorous, and the terms of their deliverance were speedy and moderate. But the subject, or the historian of Justinian, exhaled his just indignation in the language of complaint and reproach; and Procopius has confidently affirmed, that in a reign of thirty-two years, each *annual* inroad of the Barbarians consumed two hundred thousand of the inhabitants of the Roman empire. The entire population of Turkish Europe, which nearly corresponds with the provinces of Justinian, would perhaps be incapable of supplying six millions of persons, the result of this incredible estimate²².

Origin and
monarchy of
the Turks in
Asia,
A. D. 545,
&c.

In the midst of these obscure calamities, Europe felt the shock of a revolution, which first revealed to the world the name and nation of the TURKS. Like Romulus, the founder of that martial people was suckled by a she-wolf, who afterwards made him the father of a numerous progeny; and the representation of that animal

in the banners of the Turks, preserved the memory, or rather suggested the idea, of a fable, which was invented, without any mutual intercourse, by the shepherds of Latium and those of Scythia. At the equal distance of two thousand miles from the Caspian, the Icy, the Chinese, and the Bengal seas, a ridge of mountains is conspicuous, the centre, and perhaps the summit, of Asia; which, in the language of different nations, has been styled Imaus, and Caf²³, and Altai, and the Golden Mountains, and the Girdle of the Earth. The sides of the hills were productive of minerals; and the iron forges²⁴, for the purpose of war, were exercised by the Turks, the most despised portion of the slaves of the great khan of the Geougen. But their servitude could only last till a leader, bold and eloquent, should arise, to persuade his countrymen that the same arms which they forged for their masters, might become, in their own hands, the instruments of freedom and victory. They sallied from the mountain²⁵; a sceptre was the reward of his advice; and the annual ceremony, in which a piece of iron was heated in the fire, and a smith's hammer was successively handled by the prince and his nobles, recorded for ages the humble profession and rational pride of the Turkish nation. Bertezena, their first leader, signalized their valour and his own in successful combats against the neighbouring tribes; but when he presumed to ask in marriage the daughter of the great khan, the insolent demand of a

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slave and a mechanic was contemptuously rejected. The disgrace was expiated by a more noble alliance with a princess of China; and the decisive battle which almost extirpated the nation of the Geougen, established in Tartary the new and more powerful empire of the Turks. They reigned over the north; but they confessed the vanity of conquest, by their faithful attachment to the mountain of their fathers. The royal encampment seldom lost sight of mount Altai, from whence the river Irtysh descends to water the rich pastures of the Calmucks²⁰, which nourish the largest sheep and oxen in the world. The soil is fruitful, and the climate mild and temperate: the happy region was ignorant of earthquake and pestilence; the emperor's throne was turned towards the east, and a golden wolf on the top of a spear, seemed to guard the entrance of his tent. One of the successors of Bertezena was tempted by the luxury and superstition of China; but his design of building cities and temples was defeated by the simple wisdom of a Barbarian counsellor. "The Turks," he said, "are not equal
" in number to one hundredth part of the in-
" habitants of China. If we balance their power,
" and elude their armies, it is because we wan-
" der without any fixed habitations, in the ex-
" ercise of war and hunting. Are we strong?
" we advance and conquer; are we feeble? we
" retire and are concealed. Should the Turks
" confine themselves within the walls of cities,

“ the loss of a battle would be the destruction
“ of their empire. The Bonzes preach only pati-
“ ence, humility, and the renunciation of the
“ world. Such, O King! is not the religion of
“ heroes.” They entertained, with less reluct-
ance, the doctrines of Zoroaster, but the great-
est part of the nation acquiesced, without en-
quiry, in the opinions, or rather in the practice,
of their ancestors. The honours of sacrifice
were reserved for the supreme deity; they
acknowledged, in rude hymns, their obligations
to the air, the fire, the water, and the earth;
and their priests derived some profit from the art
of divination. Their unwritten laws were rigor-
ous and impartial: theft was punished by a ten-
fold restitution; adultery, treason, and murder,
with death; and no chastisement could be inflict-
ed too severe for the rare and inexpressible guilt
of cowardice. As the subject nations marched
under the standard of the Turks, their cavalry,
both men and horses, were proudly computed
by millions; one of their effective armies con-
sisted of four hundred thousand soldiers, and in
less than fifty years they were connected in peace
and war with the Romans, the Persians, and
the Chinese. In their northern limits, some ves-
tige may be discovered of the form and situation
of Kamtchatka, of a people of hunters and fisher-
men, whose sledges were drawn by dogs, and
whose habitations, were buried in the earth.
The Turks were ignorant of astronomy; but the
observation taken by some learned Chinese, with

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a gnomon of eight feet, fixes the royal camp in the latitude of forty-nine degrees, and marks their extreme progress within three, or at least ten degrees, of the polar circle²⁷. Among their southern conquests, the most splendid was that of the Nepthalites or white Huns, a polite and warlike people, who possessed the commercial cities of Bochara and Samarcand, who had vanquished the Persian monarch, and carried their victorious arms along the banks, and perhaps to the mouth, of the Indus. On the side of the west, the Turkish cavalry advanced to the lake Mæotis. They passed that lake on the ice. The khan who dwelt at the foot of mount Altai, issued his commands for the siege of Bosphorus²⁸, a city, the voluntary subject of Rome, and whose princes had formerly been the friends of Athens²⁹. To the east, the Turks invaded China, as often as the vigour of the government was relaxed: and I am taught to read in the history of the times, that they mowed down their patient enemies like hemp or grass; and that the mandarins applauded the wisdom of an emperor who repulsed these Barbarians with golden lances. This extent of savage empire compelled the Turkish monarch to establish three subordinate princes of his own blood, who soon forgot their gratitude and allegiance. The conquerors were enervated by luxury, which is always fatal except to an industrious people; the policy of China solicited the vanquished nations to resume their independence; and the

power of the Turks was limited to a period of two hundred years. The revival of their name and dominion in the southern countries of Asia, are the events of a later age; and the dynasties, which succeeded to their native realms, may sleep in oblivion; since *their* history bears no relation to the decline and fall of the Roman empire ³⁰.

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In the rapid career of conquest, the Turks attacked and subdued the nation of the Ogors or Varchonites on the banks of the river Til, which derived the epithet of black from its dark water or gloomy forests ³¹. The khan of the Ogors was slain with three hundred thousand of his subjects, and their bodies were scattered over the space of four days journey: their surviving countrymen acknowledged the strength and mercy of the Turks; and a small portion, about twenty thousand warriors, preferred exile to servitude. They followed the well-known road of the Volga, cherished the error of the nations who confounded them with the AVARS, and spread the terror of that false, though famous appellation, which had not, however, saved its lawful proprietors from the yoke of the Turks ³². After a long and victorious march, the new Avars arrived at the foot of mount Caucasus, in the country of the Alani ³³ and Circassians, where they first heard of the splendour and weakness of the Roman empire. They humbly requested their confederate, the prince of the Alani, to lead them to this source of riches; and

The Avars
fly before the
Turks, and
approach the
empire.

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Their em-
bassy to Con-
stantinople,
A. D. 558.

their ambassador, with the permission of the governor of Lazica, was transported by the Euxine sea to Constantinople. The whole city was poured forth to behold with curiosity and terror the aspect of a strange people: their long hair, which hung in tresses down their backs, was gracefully bound with ribbons, but the rest of their habit appeared to imitate the fashion of the Huns. When they were admitted to the audience of Justinian, Candish, the first of the ambassadors, addressed the Roman emperor in these terms: "You see before you, O mighty prince, the representatives of the strongest and most populous of nations, the invincible, the irresistible Avars. We are willing to devote ourselves to your service: we are able to vanquish and destroy all the enemies who now disturb your repose. But we expect, as the price of our alliance, as the reward of our valour, precious gifts, annual subsidies, and fruitful possessions." At the time of this embassy, Justinian had reigned above thirty, he had lived above seventy-five years: his mind, as well as his body, was feeble and languid; and the conqueror of Africa and Italy, careless of the permanent interest of his people, aspired only to end his days in the bosom even of inglorious peace. In a studied oration, he imparted to the senate his resolution to dissemble the insult, and to purchase the friendship of the Avars; and the whole senate, like the mandarins of China, applauded the incomparable wisdom

and foresight of their sovereign. The instruments of luxury were immediately prepared to captivate the Barbarians; silken garments, soft and splendid beds, and chains and collars incrusted with gold. The ambassadors, content with such liberal reception, departed from Constantinople, and Valentin, one of the emperor's guards, was sent with a similar character to their camp at the foot of mount Caucasus. As their destruction or their success must be alike advantageous to the empire, he persuaded them to invade the enemies of Rome; and they were easily tempted, by gifts and promises, to gratify their ruling inclinations. These fugitives who fled before the Turkish arms, passed the Tanais and Borysthenes, and boldly advanced into the heart of Poland and Germany, violating the law of nations, and abusing the rights of victory. Before ten years had elapsed, their camps were seated on the Danube and the Elbe, many Bulgarian and Sclavonian names were obliterated from the earth, and the remainder of their tribes are found, as tributaries and vassals, under the standard of the Avars. The chagan, the peculiar title of their king, still affected to cultivate the friendship of the emperor, and Justinian entertained some thoughts of fixing them in Pannonia to balance the prevailing power of the Lombards. But the virtue or treachery of an Avar betrayed the secret enmity and ambitious designs of their countrymen; and they loudly complained of the timid, though jealous policy, of detaining their ambaf-

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CHAP. fadors, and denying the arms which they had
 XLII. been allowed to purchase in the capital of the
 empire ³⁴.

Embassies of
 the Turks
 and Romans,
 A. D.
 569—582.

Perhaps the apparent change in the dispositions of the emperors, may be ascribed to the embassy which was received from the conquerors of the Avars ³⁵. The immense distance which eluded their arms, could not extinguish their resentment: the Turkish ambassadors pursued the footsteps of the vanquished to the Jaik, the Volga, mount Caucasus, the Euxine, and Constantinople, and at length appeared before the successor of Constantine, to request that he would not espouse the cause of rebels and fugitives. Even commerce had some share in this remarkable negociation: and the Sogdoites, who were now the tributaries of the Turks, embraced the fair occasion of opening, by the north of the Caspian, a new road for the importation of Chinese silk into the Roman empire. The Persian, who preferred the navigation of Ceylon, had stopped the caravans of Bochara and Samarcand: their silk was contemptuously burnt; some Turkish ambassadors died in Persia, with a suspicion of poison; and the great khan permitted his faithful vassal Maniach, the prince of the Sogdoites, to propose, at the Byzantine court, a treaty of alliance against their common enemies. Their splendid apparel and rich presents, the fruit of Oriental luxury, distinguished Maniach and his colleagues, from the rude savages of the north: their letters, in the Scythian character and language, an-

nounced a people who had attained the rudiments of science³⁶: they enumerated the conquests, they offered the friendship and military aid of the Turks; and their sincerity was attested by direful imprecations (if they were guilty of falsehood) against their own head, and the head of Disabul their master. The Greek prince entertained with hospitable regard the ambassadors of a remote and powerful monarch: the sight of silk-worms and looms disappointed the hopes of the Sogdoites; the emperor renounced, or seemed to renounce, the fugitive Avars, but he accepted the alliance of the Turks; and the ratification of the treaty was carried by a Roman minister to the foot of mount Altai. Under the successors of Justinian, the friendship of the two nations was cultivated by frequent and cordial intercourse; the most favoured vassals were permitted to imitate the example of the great khan; and one hundred and six Turks, who, on various occasions, had visited Constantinople, departed at the same time for their native country. The duration and length of the journey from the Byzantine court to mount Altai, are not specified: it might have been difficult to mark a road through the nameless deserts, the mountains, rivers, and morasses of Tartary; but a curious account has been preserved of the reception of the Roman ambassadors at the royal camp. After they had been purified with fire and incense, according to a rite still practised under the sons of Zingis, they were introduced

CHAP. XLII. to the presence of Disabul. In a valley of the Golden Mountain, they found the great khan in his tent, seated in a chair with wheels, to which an horse might be occasionally harnessed. As soon as they had delivered their presents, which were received by the proper officers, they exposed, in a florid oration, the wishes of the Roman emperor, that victory might attend the arms of the Turks, that their reign might be long and prosperous, and that a strict alliance, without envy or deceit, might for ever be maintained between the two most powerful nations of the earth. The answer of Disabul corresponded with these friendly professions, and the ambassadors were seated by his side, at a banquet which lasted the greatest part of the day: the tent was surrounded with silk hangings, and a Tartar liquor was served on the table, which possessed at least the intoxicating qualities of wine. The entertainment of the succeeding day was more sumptuous; the silk hangings of the second tent were embroidered in various figures; and the royal seat, the cups, and the vases, were of gold. A third pavilion was supported by columns of gilt wood; a bed of pure and massy gold was raised on four peacocks of the same metal: and before the entrance of the tent, dishes, basons, and statues of solid silver, and admirable art, were ostentatiously piled in wagons, the monuments of valour rather than of industry. When Disabul led his armies against the frontiers of Persia, his Roman allies followed
many

many days the march of the Turkish camp, nor, were they dismissed till they had enjoyed their precedence over the envoy of the great king, whose loud and intemperate clamours interrupted the silence of the royal banquet. The power and ambition of Chosroes cemented the union of the Turks and Romans, who touched his dominions on either side: but those distant nations, regardless of each other, consulted the dictates of interest, without recollecting the obligations of oaths and treaties. While the successor of Disabul celebrated his father's obsequies, he was saluted by the ambassadors of the emperor Tiberius, who proposed an invasion of Persia, and sustained with firmness, the angry, and perhaps the just, reproaches of that haughty Barbarian. " You see
 " my ten fingers, " said the great khan, and he applied them to his mouth. " You Romans speak
 " with as many tongues, but they are tongues
 " of deceit and perjury. To me you hold one
 " language, to my subjects another; and the
 " nations are successively deluded by your perfidious eloquence. You precipitate your allies
 " into war and danger, you enjoy their labours,
 " and you neglect your benefactors. Hasten your
 " return, inform your master that a Turk is incapable of uttering or forgiving falsehood, and
 " that he shall speedily meet the punishment which
 " he deserves. While he solicits my friendship with
 " flattering and hollow words, he is sunk to a
 " confederate of my fugitive Varchonites. If I
 " condescend to march against those contemptible

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“ slaves, they will tremble at the sound of our
“ whips; they will be trampled like a nest of
“ ants, under the feet of my innumerable cavalry.
“ I am not ignorant of the road which they have
“ followed to invade your empire; nor can I be
“ deceived by the vain pretence, that mount
“ Caucasus is the impregnable barrier of the Ro-
“ mans. I know the course of the Niester, the
“ Danube, and the Hebrus; the most warlike na-
“ tions have yielded to the arms of the Turks;
“ and from the rising to the setting sun, the
“ earth is my inheritance.” Notwithstanding this
menace, a sense of mutual advantage soon re-
newed the alliance of the Turks and Romans:
but the pride of the great khan survived his re-
sentment; and, when he announced an important
conquest to his friend the emperor Maurice, he
styled himself the master of the seven races, and
the lord of the seven climates of the world ³⁷.

State of
Persia,
A. D.
500—530.

Disputes have often arisen between the sove-
reigns of Asia, for the title of king of the world;
while the contest has proved that it could not
belong to either of the competitors. The king-
dom of the Turks was bounded by the Oxus or
Gihon; and *Touran* was separated by that great
river from the rival monarchy of *Iran*, or Persia,
which, in a smaller compass, contained perhaps
a larger measure of power and population. The
Persians, who alternately invaded and repulsed
the Turks and the Romans, were still ruled by
the house of Sassan, which ascended the throne
three hundred years before the accession of Justi-

nian. His contemporary, Cabades, or Kobad, had been successful in war against the emperor Anastasius: but the reign of that prince was distracted by civil and religious troubles. A prisoner in the hands of his subjects; an exile among the enemies of Persia; he recovered his liberty by prostituting the honour of his wife, and regained his kingdom with the dangerous and mercenary aid of the Barbarians, who had slain his father. His nobles were suspicious that Kobad never forgave the authors of his expulsion, or even those of his restoration. The people was deluded and inflamed by the fanaticism of Mazdak³⁸, who asserted the community of women³⁹, and the equality of mankind, whilst he appropriated the richest lands and most beautiful females to the use of his sectaries. The view of these disorders, which had been fomented by his laws and example⁴⁰, embittered the declining age of the Persian monarch; and his fears were increased by the consciousness of his design to reverse the natural and customary order of succession, in favour of his third and most favoured son, so famous under the names of Chosroes and Nushirvan: To render the youth more illustrious in the eyes of the nations, Kobad was desirous that he should be adopted by the emperor Justin: the hope of peace inclined the Byzantine court to accept this singular proposal; and Chosroes might have acquired a specious claim to the inheritance of his Roman parent. But the future mischief was diverted by the advice of the quæstor Pro-

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clus: a difficulty was started, whether the adoption should be performed as a civil or military rite ⁴¹; the treaty was abruptly dissolved; and the sense of this indignity sunk deep into the mind of Chosroes, who had already advanced to the Tigris on his road to Constantinople. His father did not long survive the disappointment of his wishes: the testament of their deceased sovereign was read in the assembly of the nobles; and a powerful faction, prepared for the event, and regardless of the priority of age, exalted Chosroes to the throne of Persia. He filled that throne during a prosperous period of forty-eight years ⁴²; and the JUSTICE of Nushirvan is celebrated as the theme of immortal praise by the nations of the East.

Reign of
Nushirvan.
or Chosroes.
A. D.
531—579.

But the justice of kings is understood by themselves, and even by their subjects, with an ample indulgence for the gratification of passion and interest. The virtue of Chosroes was that of a conqueror, who, in the measures of peace and war, is excited by ambition and restrained by prudence; who confounds the greatness with the happiness of a nation, and calmly devotes the lives of thousands to the fame, or even the amusement of a single man. In his domestic administration, the just Nushirvan would merit, in our feelings, the appellation of a tyrant. His two elder brothers had been deprived of their fair expectations of the diadem: their future life, between the supreme rank and the condition of subjects, was anxious to themselves and formid-

able to their master: fear as well as revenge might tempt them to rebel; the slightest evidence of a conspiracy satisfied the author of their wrongs; and the repose of Chosroes was secured by the death of these unhappy princes, with their families and adherents. One guiltless youth was saved and dismissed by the compassion of a veteran general; and this act of humanity, which was revealed by his son, overbalanced the merit of reducing twelve nations to the obedience of Persia. The zeal and prudence of Mebodes had fixed the diadem on the head of Chosroes himself; but he delayed to attend the royal summons, till he had performed the duties of a military review: he was instantly commanded to repair to the iron tripod, which stood before the gate of the palace ⁴³, where it was death to relieve or approach the victim; and Mebodes languished several days before his sentence was pronounced, by the inflexible pride and calm ingratitude of the son of Kobad. But the people, more especially in the East, is disposed to forgive, and even to applaud the cruelty which strikes at the loftiest heads; at the slaves of ambition, whose voluntary choice has exposed them to live in the smiles, and to perish by the frown of a capricious monarch. In the execution of the laws which he had no temptation to violate; in the punishment of crimes which attacked his own dignity, as well as the happiness of individuals; Nushirvan, or Chosroes, deserved the appellation of *just*. His government was firm, rigorous, and

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impartial. It was the first labour of his reign to abolish the dangerous theory of common or equal possessions; the lands and women which the sectaries of Mazdak had usurped, were restored to their lawful owners; and the temperate chastisement of the fanatics or impostors confirmed the domestic rights of society. Instead of listening with blind confidence to a favourite minister, he established four viziers over the four great provinces of his empire, Assyria, Media, Persia, and Bactriana. In the choice of judges, præfects, and counsellors, he strove to remove the mask which is always worn in the presence of kings: he wished to substitute the natural order of talents for the accidental distinctions of birth and fortune; he professed, in specious language, his intention to prefer those men who carried the poor in their bosoms, and to banish corruption from the seat of justice, as dogs were excluded from the temples of the Magi. The code of laws of the first Artaxerxes was revived and published as the rule of the magistrates; but the assurance of speedy punishment was the best security of their virtue. Their behaviour was inspected by a thousand eyes, their words were overheard by a thousand ears, the secret or public agents of the throne; and the provinces, from the Indian to the Arabian confines, were enlightened by the frequent visits of a sovereign, who affected to emulate his celestial brother in his rapid and salutary career. Education and agriculture he viewed as the two objects

most deserving of his care. In every city of Persia, orphans, and the children of the poor, were maintained and instructed at the public expence; the daughters were given in marriage to the richest citizens of their own rank; and the sons, according to their different talents, were employed in mechanic trades, or promoted to more honourable service. The deserted villages were relieved by his bounty; to the peasants and farmers who were found incapable of cultivating their lands, he distributed cattle, seed, and the instruments of husbandry; and the rare and inestimable treasure of fresh water was parsimoniously managed, and skilfully dispersed over the arid territory of Persia⁴⁴. The prosperity of that kingdom was the effect and the evidence of his virtues: his vices are those of Oriental despotism; but in the long competition between Chosroes and Justinian, the advantage both of merit and fortune is almost always on the side of the Barbarian⁴⁵.

To the praise of justice Nushirvan united the reputation of knowledge; and the seven Greek philosophers who visited his court, were invited and deceived by the strange assurance, that a disciple of Plato was seated on the Persian throne. Did they expect that a prince, strenuously exercised in the toils of war and government, should agitate, with dexterity like their own, the abstruse and profound questions which amused the leisure of the schools of Athens? Could they hope that the precepts of philosophy should direct the life, and controul the passions of a despot, whose infancy

His love of learning.

CHAP. had been taught to consider *his* absolute and
 XLII. fluctuating will as the only rule of moral obligation⁴⁶? The studies of Chosroes were ostentatious and superficial: but his example awakened the curiosity of an ingenious people, and the light of science was diffused over the dominions of Persia⁴⁷. At Gondi Sapor in the neighbourhood of the royal city of Susa, an academy of physic was founded, which insensibly became a liberal school of poetry, philosophy, and rhetoric⁴⁸. The annals of the monarchy⁴⁹ were composed; and while recent and authentic history might afford some useful lessons both to the prince and people, the darkness of the first ages was embellished by the giants, the dragons, and the fabulous heroes of Oriental romance⁵⁰. Every learned or confident stranger was enriched by the bounty, and flattered by the conversation of the monarch: he nobly rewarded a Greek physician⁵¹, by the deliverance of three thousand captives; and the sophists who contended for his favour, were exasperated by the wealth and insolence of Uranius, their more successful rival. Nushirvan believed, or at least respected, the religion of the Magi; and some traces of persecution may be discovered in his reign⁵². Yet he allowed himself freely to compare the tenets of the various sects; and the theological disputes in which he frequently presided, diminished the authority of the priest, and enlightened the minds of the people. At his command, the most celebrated writers of Greece and India were translated into the Persian

language ; a smooth and elegant idiom , recommended by Mahomet to the use of paradise : though it is branded with the epithets of savage and unmusical , by the ignorance and presumption of Agathias ⁵³. Yet the Greek historian might reasonably wonder , that it should be found possible to execute an entire version of Plato and Aristotle in a foreign dialect , which had not been framed to express the spirit of freedom and the subtleties of philosophic disquisition. And , if the reason of the Stagyrte might be equally dark , or equally intelligible in every tongue , the dramatic art and verbal argumentation of the disciple of Socrates ⁵⁴ , appear to be indissolubly mingled with the grace and perfection of his Attic style. In the search of universal knowledge , Nushirvan was informed , that the moral and political fables of Pilpay , an ancient Brachman , were preserved with jealous reverence among the treasures of the kings of India. The physician Perozes was secretly dispatched to the banks of the Ganges , with instructions to procure , at any price , the communication of this valuable work. His dexterity obtained a transcript , his learned diligence accomplished the translation ; and the fables of Pilpay ⁵⁵ were read and admired in the assembly of Nushirvan and his nobles. The Indian original , and the Persian copy , have long since disappeared : but this venerable monument has been saved by the curiosity of the Arabian califs , revived in the modern Persic , the Turkish , the Syriac , the Hebrew , and the Greek idioms , and transfused through suc-

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cessive versions into the modern languages of Europe. In their present form, the peculiar character, the manners and religion of the Hindoos, are completely obliterated; and the intrinsic merit of the fables of Pilpay is far inferior to the concise elegance of Phædrus, and the native graces of La Fontaine. Fifteen moral and political sentences are illustrated in a series of apologues; but the composition is intricate, the narrative prolix, and the precept obvious and barren. Yet the Brachman may assume the merit of *inventing* a pleasing fiction, which adorns the nakedness of truth, and alleviates, perhaps, to a royal ear, the harshness of instruction. With a similar design, to admonish kings that they are strong only in the strength of their subjects, the same Indians invented the game of chess, which was likewise introduced into Persia under the reign of Nushirvan⁵⁶.

Peace and
war with the
Romans,
A. D.
533—539.

The son of Kobad found his kingdom involved in a war with the successor of Constantine; and the anxiety of his domestic situation inclined him to grant the suspension of arms, which Justinian was impatient to purchase. Chosroes saw the Roman ambassadors at his feet. He accepted eleven thousand pounds of gold, as the price of an *endless* or indefinite peace⁵⁷; some mutual exchanges were regulated; the Persian assumed the guard of the gates of Caucasus, and the demolition of Dara was suspended, on condition that it should never be made the residence of the general of the East. This interval of repose had

been solicited, and was diligently improved by the ambition of the emperor: his African conquests were the first fruits of the Persian treaty; and the avarice of Chosroes was soothed by a large portion of the spoils of Carthage, which his ambassadors required in a tone of pleasantry, and under the colour of friendship⁵⁸. But the trophies of Belisarius disturbed the slumbers of the great king; and he heard with astonishment, envy, and fear, that Sicily, Italy, and Rome itself, had been reduced in three rapid campaigns, to the obedience of Justinian. Unpractised in the art of violating treaties, he secretly excited his bold and subtle vassal Almondar. That prince of the Saracens, who resided at Hira⁵⁹, had not been included in the general peace, and still waged an obscure war against his rival Arethas, the chief of the tribe of Gassan, and confederate of the empire. The subject of their dispute was an extensive sheepwalk in the desert to the south of Palmyra. An immemorial tribute for the licence of pasture, appeared to attest the rights of Almondar, while the Gassanite appealed to the Latin name of *strata*, a paved road, as an unquestionable evidence of the sovereignty and labours of the Romans⁶⁰. The two monarchs supported the cause of their respective vassals; and the Persian Arab, without expecting the event of a slow and doubtful arbitration, enriched his flying camp with the spoil and captives of Syria. Instead of repelling the arms, Justinian attempted to seduce the fidelity, of Almondar,

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while he called from the extremities of the earth, the nations of Æthiopia and Scythia to invade the dominions of his rival. But the aid of such allies was distant and precarious, and the discovery of this hostile correspondence justified the complaints of the Goths and Armenians, who implored, almost at the same time, the protection of Chosroes. The descendants of Arfaces, who were still numerous in Armenia, had been provoked to assert the last relics of national freedom and hereditary rank; and the ambassadors of Vitiges had secretly traversed the empire to expose the instant, and almost inevitable danger of the kingdom of Italy. Their representations were uniform, weighty, and effectual. “ We
“ stand before your throne, the advocates of
“ your interest as well as of our own. The
“ ambitious and faithless Justinian aspires to be
“ the sole master of the world. Since the endless
“ peace, which betrayed the common freedom
“ of mankind, that prince, your ally in words,
“ your enemy in actions, has alike insulted his
“ friends and foes, and has filled the earth with
“ blood and confusion. Has he not violated the
“ privileges of Armenia, the independence of
“ Colchos, and the wild liberty of the Tzanian
“ mountains? Has he not usurped, with equal
“ avidity, the city of Bosphorus on the frozen
“ Mæotis, and the vale of palm-trees on the
“ shores of the Red Sea? The Moors, the Van-
“ dals, the Goths, have been successively oppres-
“ sed, and each nation has calmly remained the

“ spectator of their neighbour’s ruin. Embrace,
 “ O king! the favourable moment; the East is
 “ left without defence, while the armies of Justi-
 “ nian and his renowned general are detained in
 “ the distant regions of the West. If you hesit-
 “ ate and delay, Belisarius and his victorious
 “ troops will soon return from the Tyber to the
 “ Tigris, and Persia may enjoy the wretched
 “ consolation of being the last devoured ^{“1.”} By
 such arguments, Chosroes was easily persuaded
 to imitate the example which he condemned: but
 the Persian, ambitious of military fame, disdained
 the inactive warfare of a rival, who issued his
 sanguinary commands from the secure station of
 the Byzantine palace.

Whatever might be the provocations of Chos-
 roes, he abused the confidence of treaties; and
 the just reproaches of dissimulation and falsehood
 could only be concealed by the lustre of his victo-
 ries ^{“2.”} The Persian army, which had been assem-
 bled in the plains of Babylon, prudently declined
 the strong cities of Mesopotamia, and followed
 the western bank of the Euphrates, till the small
 though populous town of Dura presumed to arrest
 the progress of the great king. The gates of
 Dura, by treachery and surprise, were burst open;
 and as soon as Chosroes had stained his scymiter
 with the blood of the inhabitants, he dismissed
 the ambassador of Justinian to inform his master
 in what place he had left the enemy of the Ro-
 mans. The conqueror still affected the praise of
 humanity and justice; and as he beheld a noble

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He invades
 Syria,
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matron with her infant rudely dragged along the ground, he sighed, he wept, and implored the divine justice to punish the author of these calamities. Yet the herd of twelve thousand captives was ransomed for two hundred pounds of gold; the neighbouring bishop of Sergiopolis pledged his faith for the payment; and in the subsequent year the unfeeling avarice of Chosroes exacted the penalty of an obligation which it was generous to contract and impossible to discharge. He advanced into the heart of Syria; but a feeble enemy, who vanished at his approach, disappointed him of the honour of victory; and as he could not hope to establish his dominion, the Persian king displayed in this inroad the mean and rapacious vices of a robber. Hierapolis, Berrhæa or Aleppo, Apamea and Chalcis, were successively besieged: they redeemed their safety by a ransom of gold or silver, proportioned to their respective strength and opulence; and their new master enforced, without observing, the terms of capitulation. Educated in the religion of the Magi, he exercised, without remorse, the lucrative trade of sacrilege; and, after stripping of its gold and gems, a piece of the true cross, he generously restored the naked relic to the devotion of the Christians of Apamea. No more than fourteen years had elapsed since Antioch was ruined by an earthquake; but the queen of the East, the new Theopolis, had been raised from the ground by the liberality of Justinian; and the increasing greatness of the buildings and the people already

and ruins
Antioch.

erased the memory of this recent disaster. On one side, the city was defended by the mountain, on the other by the river Orontes; but the most accessible part was commanded by a superior eminence: the proper remedies were rejected, from the despicable fear of discovering its weakness to the enemy; and Germanus, the emperor's nephew, refused to trust his person and dignity within the walls of a besieged city. The people of Antioch had inherited the vain and satirical genius of their ancestors: they were elated by a sudden reinforcement of six thousand soldiers; they disdained the offers of an easy capitulation; and their intemperate clamours insulted from the ramparts the majesty of the great king. Under his eye the Persian myriads mounted with scaling-ladders to the assault; the Roman mercenaries fled through the opposite gate of Daphne; and the generous resistance of the youth of Antioch served only to aggravate the miseries of their country. As Chosroes, attended by the ambassadors of Justinian, was descending from the mountain, he affected, in a plaintive voice, to deplore the obstinacy and ruin of that unhappy people; but the slaughter still raged with unrelenting fury; and the city, at the command of a Barbarian, was delivered to the flames. The cathedral of Antioch was indeed preserved by the avarice, not the piety, of the conqueror: a more honourable exemption was granted to the church of St. Julian, and the quarter of the town where the ambassadors resided; some distant streets were saved by the shifting of

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the wind, and the walls still subsisted to protect, and soon to betray, their new inhabitants. Fanicism had defaced the ornaments of Daphne, but Chosroes breathed a purer air amidst her groves and fountains; and some idolaters in his train might sacrifice with impunity to the nymphs of that elegant retreat. Eighteen miles below Antioch, the river Orontes falls into the Mediterranean. The haughty Persian visited the term of his conquests; and after bathing alone in the sea, he offered a solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving to the sun, or rather to the creator of the sun, whom the Magi adored. If this act of superstition offended the prejudices of the Syrians, they were pleased by the courteous and even eager attention with which he assisted at the games of the circus; and as Chosroes had heard that the *blue* faction was espoused by the emperor, his peremptory command secured the victory of the *green* charioteer. From the discipline of his camp the people derived more solid consolation; and they interceded in vain for the life of a soldier who had too faithfully copied the rapine of the just Nushirvan. At length, fatigued, though unsatiated, with the spoil of Syria, he slowly moved to the Euphrates, formed a temporary bridge in the neighbourhood of Barbalissus, and defined the space of three days for the entire passage of his numerous host. After his return, he founded, at the distance of one day's journey from the palace of Ctesiphon, a new city, which perpetuated the joint names of Chosroes and of Antioch. The
Syrian

Syrian captives recognised the form and situation of their native abodes: baths and a stately circus were constructed for their use; and a colony of musicians and charioteers revived in Assyria the pleasures of a Greek capital. By the munificence of the royal founder, a liberal allowance was assigned to these fortunate exiles; and they enjoyed the singular privilege of bestowing freedom on the slaves whom they acknowledged as their kinsmen. Palestine, and the holy wealth of Jerusalem, were the next objects that attracted the ambition, or rather the avarice, of Chosroes. Constantinople, and the palace of the Cæsars, no longer appeared impregnable or remote; and his aspiring fancy already covered Asia Minor with the troops, and the Black Sea with the navies, of Persia.

These hopes might have been realized, if the conqueror of Italy had not been seasonably recalled to the defence of the East⁶³. While Chosroes pursued his ambitious designs on the coast of the Euxine, Belisarius, at the head of an army without pay or discipline, encamped beyond the Euphrates, within six miles of Nisibis. He meditated by a skilful operation, to draw the Persians from their impregnable citadel, and improving his advantage in the field, either to intercept their retreat, or perhaps to enter the gates with the flying Barbarians. He advanced one day's journey on the territories of Persia, reduced the fortress of Sifaurane, and sent the governor, with eight

Defence of
the East by
Belisarius,
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hundred chosen horsemen, to serve the emperor in his Italian wars. He detached Arethas and his Arabs, supported by twelve hundred Romans, to pass the Tigris, and to ravage the harvests of Assyria, a fruitful province, long exempt from the calamities of war. But the plans of Belisarius were disconcerted by the untractable spirit of Arethas, who neither returned to the camp, nor sent any intelligence of his motions. The Roman general was fixed in anxious expectation to the same spot; the time of action elapsed, the ardent sun of Mesopotamia inflamed with fevers the blood of his European soldiers; and the stationary troops and officers of Syria affected to tremble for the safety of their defenceless cities. Yet this diversion had already succeeded in forcing Chosroes to return with loss and precipitation; and if the skill of Belisarius had been seconded by discipline and valour, his success might have satisfied the sanguine wishes of the public, who required at his hands the conquest of Ctesiphon and the deliverance of the captives of Antioch. At the end of the campaign, he was recalled to Constantinople by an ungrateful court, but the dangers of the ensuing spring restored his confidence and command; and the hero, almost alone, was dispatched with the speed of post-horses, to repel by his name and presence the invasion of Syria. He found the Roman generals, among whom was a nephew of Justinian, imprisoned by their fears in the fortifications of Hierapolis. But instead of listening

to their timid counfels, Belifarius commanded them to follow him to Europus, where he had refolved to collect his forces, and to execute whatever God fhould infpire him to atchieve againft the enemy. His firm attitude on the banks of the Euphrates, reftained Chofroes from advancing towards Palestine; and he received with art and dignity, the ambaffadors, or rather fpies of the Perfian monarch. The plain between Hierapolis and the river was covered with the fquadrons of cavalry, fix thoufand hunters tall and robuft, who purfued their game without the apprehenfion of an enemy. On the oppofite bank the ambaffadors defcried a thoufand Armenian horfe, who appeared to guard the paffage of the Euphrates. The tent of Belifarius was of the coarfeft linen, the fimple equipage of a warrior who difdained the luxury of the Eaft. Around his tent, the nations who marched under his ftandard, were arranged with fkilful confufion. The Thracians and Illyrians were pofted in the front, the Heruli and Goths in the centre; the profpect was clofed by the Moors and Vandals; and their loofe array feemed to multiply their numbers. Their drefs was light and active; one foldier carried a whip, another a fword, a third a bow, a fourth perhaps a battle-axe, and the whole picture exhibited the intrepidity of the troops and the vigilance of the general. Chofroes was deluded by the addrefs, and awed by the genius, of the lieutenant of Juftinian. Confcious of the merit, and ignorant of the

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&c.

force of his antagonist, he dreaded a decisive battle in a distant country, from whence not a Persian might return to relate the melancholy tale. The great king hastened to repass the Euphrates; and Belisarius pressed his retreat, by affecting to oppose a measure so salutary to the empire, and which could scarcely have been prevented by an army of an hundred thousand men. Envy might suggest to ignorance and pride, that the public enemy had been suffered to escape: but the African and Gothic triumphs are less glorious than this safe and bloodless victory, in which neither fortune, nor the valour of the soldiers, can subtract any part of the general's renown. The second removal of Belisarius from the Persian to the Italian war, revealed the extent of his personal merit, which had corrected or supplied the want of discipline and courage. Fifteen generals, without concert or skill, led through the mountains of Armenia an army of thirty thousand Romans, inattentive to their signals, their ranks, and their ensigns. Four thousand Persians, entranced in the camp of Dubis, vanquished, almost without a combat, this disorderly multitude; their useless arms were scattered along the road, and their horses sunk under the fatigue of their rapid flight. But the Arabs of the Roman party prevailed over their brethren; the Armenians returned to their allegiance; the cities of Dara and Edessa resisted a sudden assault and a regular siege, and the calamities of war were suspended by those of pesti-

lence. A tacit or formal agreement between the two sovereigns, protected the tranquillity of the eastern frontier; and the arms of Chosroes were confined to the Colchian or Lazic war, which has been too minutely described by the historians of the times “.

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The extreme length of the Euxine sea “, from Constantinople to the mouth of the Phasis, may be computed as a voyage of nine days, and a measure of seven hundred miles. From the Iberian Caucasus, the most lofty and craggy mountains of Asia, that river descends with such oblique vehemence, that in a short space it is traversed by one hundred and twenty bridges. Nor does the stream become placid and navigable, till it reaches the town of Sarapana, five days journey from the Cyrus, which flows from the same hills, but in a contrary direction, to the Caspian lake. The proximity of these rivers has suggested the practice, or at least the idea, of wafting the precious merchandise of India down the Oxus, over the Caspian, up the Cyrus, and with the current of the Phasis into the Euxine and Mediterranean seas. As it successively collects the streams of the plain of Colchos, the Phasis moves with diminished speed, though accumulated weight. At the mouth it is sixty fathom deep, and half a league broad, but a small woody island is interposed in the midst of the channel: the water, so soon as it has deposited an earthy or metallic sediment, floats on the surface of the waves, and is no longer suf-

Description
of Colchos,
Lazica, or
Mingrelia.

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ceptible of corruption. In a course of one hundred miles, forty of which are navigable for large vessels, the Phasis divides the celebrated region of Colchos⁶⁶, or Mingrelia⁶⁷, which, on three sides, is fortified by the Iberian and Armenian mountains, and whose maritime coast extends about two hundred miles, from the neighbourhood of Trebizond to Dioscurias, and the confines of Circassia. Both the soil and climate are relaxed by excessive moisture: twenty-eight rivers, besides the Phasis and his dependent streams, convey their waters to the sea; and the hollowness of the ground appears to indicate the subterraneous channels between the Euxine and the Caspian. In the fields where wheat or barley is sown, the earth is too soft to sustain the action of the plough; but the *gom*, a small grain, not unlike the millet or coriander seed, supplies the ordinary food of the people; and the use of bread is confined to the prince and his nobles. Yet the vintage is more plentiful than the harvest; and the bulk of the stems, as well as the quality of the wine, display the unassisted powers of nature. The same powers continually tend to overshadow the face of the country with thick forests; the timber of the hills, and the flax of the plains, contribute to the abundance of naval stores; the wild and tame animals, the horse, the ox, and the hog are remarkably prolific, and the name of the pheasant is expressive of his native habitation on the banks of the Phasis. The gold mines to the south of Trebizond, which are still worked with sufficient

profit, were a subject of national dispute between Justinian and Chosroes; and it is not unreasonable to believe, that a vein of precious metal may be equally diffused through the circle of the hills, although these secret treasures are neglected by the laziness, or concealed by the prudence, of the Mingrelians. The waters, impregnated with particles of gold, are carefully strained through sheep-skins or fleeces; but this expedient, the ground-work perhaps of a marvellous fable, affords a faint image of the wealth extracted from a virgin-earth by the power and industry of ancient kings. Their silver palaces and golden chambers surpass our belief; but the fame of their riches is said to have excited the enterprising avarice of the Argonauts⁶⁸. Tradition has affirmed, with some colour of reason, that Egypt planted on the Phasis, a learned and polite colony⁶⁹, which manufactured linen, built navies, and invented geographical maps. The ingenuity of the moderns has peopled, with flourishing cities and nations, the isthmus between the Euxine and the Caspian⁷⁰; and a lively writer, observing the resemblance of climate, and, in his apprehension, of trade, has not hesitated to pronounce Colchos the Holland of antiquity⁷¹.

But the riches of Colchos shine only through the darkness of conjecture or tradition, and its genuine history presents an uniform scene of rudeness and poverty. If one hundred and thirty languages were spoken in the market of Dioscurias⁷², they were the imperfect idioms

Manners of
the natives.

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of so many savage tribes or families, sequestered from each other in the vallies of mount Caucasus; and their separation, which diminished the importance, must have multiplied the number, of their rustic capitals. In the present state of Mingrelia, a village is an assemblage of huts within a wooden fence; the fortresses are seated in the depth of forests; the princely town of Cyta, or Cotatis, consists of two hundred houses, and a stone edifice appertains only to the magnificence of kings. Twelve ships from Constantinople, and about sixty barks, laden with the fruits of industry, annually cast anchor on the coast; and the list of Colchian exports is much encreased, since the natives had only slaves and hides to offer in exchange for the corn and salt which they purchased from the subjects of Justinian. Not a vestige can be found of the art, the knowledge, or the navigation, of the ancient Colchians: few Greeks desired or dared to pursue the footsteps of the Argonauts; and even the marks of an Egyptian colony are lost on a nearer approach. The rite of circumcision is practised only by the Mahometans of the Euxine; and the curled hair and swarthy complexion of Africa no longer disfigure the most perfect of the human race. It is in the adjacent climates of Georgia, Mingrelia, and Circassia, that nature has placed, at least to our eyes, the model of beauty, in the shape of the limbs, the colour of the skin, the symmetry of the features, and the expression of the countenance⁷³. According to the destination

of the two sexes, the men seem formed for action, the women for love; and the perpetual supply of females from mount Caucasus has purified the blood, and improved the breed, of the southern nations of Asia. The proper district of Mingrelia, a portion only of the ancient Colchos, has long sustained an exportation of twelve thousand slaves. The number of prisoners or criminals would be inadequate to the annual demand; but the common people are in a state of servitude to their lords; the exercise of fraud or rapine is unpunished in a lawless community; and the market is continually replenished by the abuse of civil and paternal authority. Such a trade⁷⁴, which reduces the human species to the level of cattle, may tend to encourage marriage and population; since the multitude of children enriches their sordid and inhuman parent. But this source of impure wealth must inevitably poison the national manners, obliterate the sense of honour and virtue, and almost extinguish the instincts of nature: the *Christians* of Georgia and Mingrelia are the most dissolute of mankind; and their children, who, in a tender age, are sold into foreign slavery, have already learnt to imitate the rapine of the father and the prostitution of the mother. Yet, amidst the rudest ignorance, the untaught natives discover a singular dexterity both of mind and hand; and although the want of union and discipline exposes them to their more powerful neighbours, a bold and intrepid spirit has animated the Colchians of every age. In the host of Xerxes, they served on foot; and

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their arms were a dagger or a javelin, a wooden casque, and a buckler of raw hides. But in their own country the use of cavalry has more generally prevailed: the meanest of the peasants disdain to walk; the martial nobles are possessed, perhaps, of two hundred horses; and above five thousand are numbered in the train of the prince of Mingrelia. The Colchian government has been always a pure and hereditary kingdom; and the authority of the sovereign is only restrained by the turbulence of his subjects. Whenever they were obedient, he could lead a numerous army into the field; but some faith is requisite to believe, that the single tribe of the Suanians was composed of two hundred thousand soldiers, or that the population of Mingrelia now amounts to four millions of inhabitants⁷⁵.

Revolutions
of Colchos:

It was the boast of the Colchians, that their ancestors had checked the victories of Sesostris; and the defeat of the Egyptian is less incredible than his successful progress as far as the foot of mount Caucasus. They sunk, without any memorable effort, under the arms of Cyrus; followed in distant wars the standard of the great king, and presented him every fifth year with one hundred boys and as many virgins, the fairest produce of the land⁷⁶. Yet he accepted this *gift* like the gold and ebony of India, the frankincense of the Arabs, or the negroes and ivory of Æthiopia: the Colchians were not subject to the dominion of a satrap, and they continued to enjoy the name as well as substance of national independ-

under the
Persians, be-
fore Christ,
500;

ence⁷⁷. After the fall of the Persian empire, Mithridates, king of Pontus, added Colchos to the wide circle of his dominions on the Euxine; and when the natives presumed to request that his son might reign over them, he bound the ambitious youth in chains of gold, and delegated a servant in his place. In the pursuit of Mithridates, the Romans advanced to the banks of the Phasis, and their gallies ascended the river they till reached the camp of Pompey and his legions⁷⁸. But the senate, and afterwards the emperors, disdained to reduce that distant and useless conquest into the form of a province. The family of a Greek rhetorician was permitted to reign in Colchos and the adjacent kingdoms, from the time of Mark Antony to that of Nero; and after the race of Polemo⁷⁹ was extinct, the eastern Pontus, which preserved his name, extended no farther than the neighbourhood of Trebizond. Beyond these limits the fortifications of Hyffus, of Apfarus, of the Phasis, of Dioscurias or Sebastopolis, and of Pityus, were guarded by sufficient detachments of horse and foot; and six princes of Colchos received their diadems from the lieutenants of Cæsar. One of these lieutenants, the eloquent and philosophic Arrian, surveyed, and has described, the Euxine coast, under the reign of Hadrian. The garrison which he reviewed at the mouth of the Phasis, consisted of four hundred chosen legionaries; the brick walls and towers, the double ditch, and the military engines on the ram-

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under the
Romans, be-
fore Christ,
60.

Visit of Ar-
rian,
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of the Lazi,
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part, rendered this place inaccessible to the Barbarians; but the new suburbs which had been built by the merchants and veterans, required, in the opinion of Arrian, some external defence⁸⁰. As the strength of the empire was gradually impaired, the Romans stationed on the Phasis were either withdrawn or expelled; and the tribe of the Lazi⁸¹, whose posterity speak a foreign dialect, and inhabit the sea-coast of Trebizond, imposed their name and dominion on the ancient kingdom of Colchos. Their independence was soon invaded by a formidable neighbour, who had acquired, by arms and treaties, the sovereignty of Iberia. The dependent king of Lazica, received his sceptre at the hands of the Persian monarch, and the successors of Constantine acquiesced in this injurious claim, which was proudly urged as a right of immemorial prescription. In the beginning of the sixth century, their influence was restored by the introduction of Christianity, which the Mingrelians still profess with becoming zeal, without understanding the doctrines, or observing the precepts of their religion. After the decease of his father, Zathus was exalted to the regal dignity by the favour of the great king: but the pious youth abhorred the ceremonies of the Magi, and sought, in the palace of Constantinople, an orthodox baptism, a noble wife, and the alliance of the emperor Justin. The king of Lazica was solemnly invested with the diadem, and his cloak and tunic of white silk, with a

gold border, displayed, in rich embroidery, the figure of his new patron; who soothed the jealousy of the Persian court, and excused the revolt of Colchos, by the venerable names of hospitality and religion. The common interest of both empires imposed on the Colchians the duty of guarding the passes of mount Caucasus, where a wall of sixty miles is now defended by the monthly service of the musqueteers of Mingrelia⁸².

But this honourable connection was soon corrupted by the avarice and ambition of the Romans. Degraded from the rank of allies, the Lazi were incessantly reminded, by words and actions, of their dependent state. At the distance of a day's journey beyond the Apfarus, they beheld the rising fortrefs of Petra⁸³, which commanded the maritime country to the south of the Phasis. Instead of being protected by the valour, Colchos was insulted by the licentiousness, of foreign mercenaries; the benefits of commerce were converted into base and vexatious monopoly, and Gubazes, the native prince, was reduced to a pageant of royalty by the superior influence of the officers of Justinian. Disappointed in their expectations of Christian virtue, the indignant Lazi reposed some confidence in the justice of an unbeliever. After a private assurance that their ambassadors should not be delivered to the Romans, they publicly solicited the friendship and aid of Chosroes. The sagacious monarch instantly discerned the use and

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chians,
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importance of Colchos; and meditated a plan of conquest, which was renewed at the end of a thousand years by Shah Abbas, the wisest and most powerful of his successors⁸⁴. His ambition was fired by the hope of launching a Persian navy from the Phasis, of commanding the trade and navigation of the Euxine sea, of desolating the coast of Pontus and Bithynia, of distressing, perhaps of attacking, Constantinople, and of persuading the Barbarians of Europe to second his arms and counsels against the common enemy of mankind. Under the pretence of a Scythian war, he silently led his troops to the frontiers of Iberia; the Colchian guides were prepared to conduct them through the woods and along the precipices of mount Caucasus: and a narrow path was laboriously formed into a safe and spacious highway, for the march of cavalry, and even of elephants. Gubazes laid his person and diadem at the feet of the king of Persia; his Colchians imitated the submission of their prince; and after the walls of Petra had been shaken, the Roman garrison prevented, by a capitulation, the impending fury of the last assault. But the Lazi soon discovered, that their impatience had urged them to chuse an evil more intolerable than the calamities which they strove to escape. The monopoly of salt and corn was effectually removed by the loss of those valuable commodities. The authority of a Roman legislator was succeeded by the pride of an Oriental despot, who beheld with equal disdain, the slaves whom

he had exalted, and the kings whom he had humbled before the footstool of his throne. The adoration of fire was introduced into Colchos by the zeal of the Magi: their intolerant spirit provoked the fervour of a Christian people; and the prejudice of nature or education was wounded by the impious practice of exposing the dead bodies of their parents, on the summit of a lofty tower, to the crows and vultures of the air⁸⁵. Conscious of the encreasing hatred, which retarded the execution of his great designs, the just Nushirvan had secretly given orders to assassinate the king of the Lazi, to transplant the people into some distant land, and to fix a faithful and warlike colony on the banks of the Phasis. The watchful jealousy of the Colchians foresaw and averted the approaching ruin. Their repentance was accepted at Constantinople by the prudence, rather than the clemency, of Justinian; and he commanded Dagisteus, with seven thousand Romans, and one thousand of the Zani, to expel the Persians from the coast of the Euxine.

The siege of Petra, which the Roman general, with the aid of the Lazi, immediately undertook, is one of the most remarkable actions of the age. The city was seated on a craggy rock, which hung over the sea, and communicated by a steep and narrow path with the land. Since the approach was difficult, the attack might be deemed impossible: the Persian conqueror had strengthened the fortifications of Justinian; and the places

Siege of
Petra,
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least inaccessible were covered by additional bulwarks. In this important fortrefs, the vigilance of Chofroes had deposited a magazine of offensive and defensive arms, fufficient for five times the number, not only of the garrison, but of the besiegers themselves. The stock of flour and salt provisions was adequate to the consumption of five years; the want of wine was supplied by vinegar, and grain from whence a strong liquor was extracted; and a triple aqueduct eluded the diligence, and even the suspicions, of the enemy. But the firmest defence of Petra was placed in the valour of fifteen hundred Persians, who resisted the assaults of the Romans, whilst, in a softer vein of earth, a mine was secretly perforated. The wall, supported by slender and temporary props, hung tottering in the air; but Dagisteus delayed the attack till he had secured a specific recompence; and the town was relieved before the return of his messenger from Constantinople. The Persian garrison was reduced to four hundred men, of whom no more than fifty were exempt from sickness or wounds; yet such had been their inflexible perseverance, that they concealed their losses from the enemy, by enduring, without a murmur, the sight and putrefying stench of the dead bodies of their eleven hundred companions. After their deliverance, the breaches were hastily stopped with sand-bags; the mine was replenished with earth; a new wall was erected on a frame of substantial timber; and a fresh garrison of three thousand men was stationed
at

at Petra to sustain the labours of a second siege. The operations both of the attack, and defence, were conducted with skilful obstinacy; and each party derived useful lessons from the experience of their past faults. A battering ram was invented, of light construction and powerful effect: it was transported and worked by the hands of forty soldiers; and as the stones were loosened by its repeated strokes, they were torn with long iron hooks from the wall. From those walls, a shower of darts was incessantly poured on the heads of the assailants, but they were most dangerously annoyed by a fiery composition of sulphur and bitumen, which in Colchos might with some propriety be named the oil of Medea. Of six thousand Romans who mounted the scaling-ladders, their general Bessas was the first, a gallant veteran of seventy years of age: the courage of their leader, his fall, and extreme danger, animated the irresistible effort of his troops; and their prevailing numbers oppressed the strength, without subduing the spirit of the Persian garrison. The fate of these valiant men deserves to be more distinctly noticed. Seven hundred had perished in the siege, two thousand three hundred survived to defend the breach. One thousand and seventy were destroyed with fire and sword in the last assault; and if seven hundred and thirty were made prisoners, only eighteen among them were found without the marks of honourable wounds. The remaining five hundred escaped into the citadel, which they maintained with-

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out any hopes of relief, rejecting the fairest terms of capitulation and service, till they were lost in the flames. They died in obedience to the commands of their prince; and such examples of loyalty and valour might excite their countrymen to deeds of equal despair and more prosperous event. The instant demolition of the works of Petra confessed the astonishment and apprehension of the conqueror.

The Col-
chian or La-
zic war,
A. D
549—556.

A Spartan would have praised and pitied the virtue of these heroic slaves: but the tedious warfare and alternate success of the Roman and Persian arms cannot detain the attention of posterity at the foot of mount Caucasus. The advantages obtained by the troops of Justinian were more frequent and splendid; but the forces of the great king were continually supplied, till they amounted to eight elephants and seventy thousand men, including twelve thousand Scythian allies, and above three thousand Dilemites, who descended by their free choice from the hills of Hyrcania, and were equally formidable in close or in distant combat. The siege of Archæopolis, a name imposed or corrupted by the Greeks, was raised with some loss and precipitation; but the Persians occupied the passes of Iberia: Colchos was enslaved by their forts and garrisons; they devoured the scanty sustenance of the people; and the prince of the Lazi fled into the mountains. In the Roman camp, faith and discipline were unknown; and the independent leaders, who were invested with equal power, disputed with each other the pre-eminence of vice and corruption.

The Persians followed, without a murmur, the commands of a single chief, who implicitly obeyed the instructions of their supreme lord. Their general was distinguished among the heroes of the East by his wisdom in council and his valour in the field. The advanced age of Mermeroes, and the lameness of both his feet, could not diminish the activity of his mind, or even of his body; and, whilst he was carried in a litter in the front of battle, he inspired terror to the enemy and a just confidence to the troops who, under his banners, were always successful. After his death, the command devolved to Nacoragan, a proud satrap, who, in a conference with the Imperial chiefs, had presumed to declare that he disposed of victory as absolutely as of the ring on his finger. Such presumption was the natural cause and forerunner of a shameful defeat. The Romans had been gradually repulsed to the edge of the sea-shore; and their last camp, on the ruins of the Grecian colony of Phasis, was defended on all sides by strong intrenchments, the river, the Euxine, and a fleet of gallies. Despair united their counsels and invigorated their arms: they withstood the assault of the Persians; and the flight of Nacoragan preceded or followed the slaughter of ten thousand of his bravest soldiers. He escaped from the Romans, to fall into the hands of an unforgiving master, who severely chastised the error of his own choice: the unfortunate general was flayed alive, and his skin, stuffed into the human form, was ex-

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posed on a mountain; a dreadful warning to those who might hereafter be entrusted with the same and fortune of Persia ⁸⁶. Yet the prudence of Chosroes insensibly relinquished the prosecution of the Colchian war, in the just persuasion, that it is impossible to reduce, or, at least, to hold a distant country against the wishes and efforts of its inhabitants. The fidelity of Gubazes sustained the most rigorous trials. He patiently endured the hardships of a savage life, and rejected, with disdain, the specious temptations of the Persian court. The king of the Lazi had been educated in the Christian religion; his mother was the daughter of a senator; during his youth, he had served ten years a silentary of the Byzantine palace ⁸⁷, and the arrears of an unpaid salary were a motive of attachment as well as of complaint. But the long continuance of his sufferings extorted from him a naked representation of the truth; and truth was an unpardonable libel on the lieutenants of Justinian, who, amidst the delays of a ruinous war, had spared his enemies and trampled on his allies. Their malicious information persuaded the emperor, that his faithless vassal already meditated a second defection: an order was surpris'd to send him prisoner to Constantinople; a treacherous clause was inserted, that he might be lawfully killed in case of resistance; and Gubazes, without arms, or suspicion of danger, was stabbed in the security of a friendly interview. In the first moments of rage and despair, the Col-

chians would have sacrificed their country and religion to the gratification of revenge. But the authority and eloquence of the wiser few, obtained a salutary pause: the victory of the Phasis restored the terror of the Roman arms, and the emperor was solicitous to absolve his own name from the imputation of so foul a murder. A judge of senatorial rank was commissioned to enquire into the conduct and death of the king of the Lazi. He ascended a stately tribunal, encompassed by the ministers of justice and punishment: in the presence of both nations, this extraordinary cause was pleaded, according to the forms of civil jurisprudence, and some satisfaction was granted to an injured people, by the sentence and execution of the meaner criminals⁸⁸.

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In peace, the king of Persia continually sought the pretences of a rupture; but no sooner had he taken up arms, than he expressed his desire of a safe and honourable treaty. During the fiercest hostilities, the two monarchs entertained a deceitful negociation; and such was the superiority of Chosroes, that whilst he treated the Roman ministers with insolence and contempt, he obtained the most unprecedented honours for his own ambassadors at the Imperial court. The successor of Cyrus assumed the majesty of the Eastern sun, and graciously permitted his younger brother Justinian to reign over the West, with the pale and reflected splendour of the moon. This gigantic style was supported by

N. negociations
and treaties
between
Justinian and
Chosroes,
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the pomp and eloquence of Isdigune, one of the royal chamberlains. His wife and daughters, with a train of eunuchs and camels, attended the march of the ambassador: two satraps with golden diadems were numbered among his followers: he was guarded by five hundred horse, the most valiant of the Persians; and the Roman governor of Dara wisely refused to admit more than twenty of this martial and hostile caravan. When Isdigune had saluted the emperor, and delivered his presents, he passed ten months at Constantinople without discussing any serious affairs. Instead of being confined to his palace, and receiving food and water from the hands of his keepers, the Persian ambassador, without spies or guards, was allowed to visit the capital; and the freedom of conversation and trade enjoyed by his domestics, offended the prejudices of an age, which rigorously practised the law of nations, without confidence or courtesy³⁹. By an unexampled indulgence, his interpreter, a servant below the notice of a Roman magistrate, was seated, at the table of Justinian, by the side of his master; and one thousand pounds of gold might be assigned for the expence of his journey and entertainment. Yet the repeated labours of Isdigune could procure only a partial and imperfect truce, which was always purchased with the treasures, and renewed at the solicitation, of the Byzantine court. Many years of fruitless desolation elapsed before Justinian and Chosroes were compelled,

by mutual lassitude, to consult the repose of their declining age. At a conference held on the frontier, each party, without expecting to gain credit, displayed the power, the justice, and the pacific intentions of their respective sovereigns; but necessity and interest dictated the treaty of peace, which was concluded for a term of fifty years, diligently composed in the Greek and Persian language, and attested by the seals of twelve interpreters. The liberty of commerce and religion was fixed and defined; the allies of the emperor and the great king were included in the same benefits and obligations; and the most scrupulous precautions were provided to prevent or determine the accidental disputes that might arise on the confines of two hostile nations. After twenty years of destructive though feeble war, the limits still remained without alteration; and Chosroes was persuaded to renounce his dangerous claim to the possession or sovereignty of Colchos and its dependent states. Rich in the accumulated treasures of the East, he extorted from the Romans an annual payment of thirty thousand pieces of gold; and the smallness of the sum revealed the disgrace of a tribute in its naked deformity. In a previous debate, the chariot of Sesostris, and the wheel of fortune, were applied by one of the ministers of Justinian, who observed that the reduction of Antioch, and some Syrian cities, had elevated beyond measure the vain and ambitious spirit of the Barbarian. "You are mistaken," replied the

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modest Persian : “ the king of kings, the lord
“ of mankind, looks down with contempt on
“ such petty acquisitions ; and of the ten nations,
“ vanquished by his invincible arms, he esteems
“ the Romans as the least formidable ”. ” Ac-
cording to the Orientals, the empire of Nushirvan
extended from Ferganah in Tranfoxiana, to Ye-
men or Arabia Fælix. He subdued the rebels of
Hyrkania, reduced the provinces of Cabul and
Zablestan on the banks of the Indus, broke the
power of the Euthalites, terminated by an
honourable treaty the Turkish war, and admitted
the daughter of the great khan into the number
of his lawful wives. Victorious and respected
among the princes of Asia, he gave audience,
in his palace of Madain, or Ctesiphon, to the
ambassadors of the world. Their gifts or tributes,
arms, rich garments, gems, slaves, or aromatics,
were humbly presented at the foot of his throne;
and he condescended to accept from the king of
India, ten quintals of the wood of aloes, a maid
seven cubits in height, and a carpet softer than
silk, the skin, as it was reported, of an extra-
ordinary serpent ”.

Conquests of
the Abyssinians,
A. D. 522.

Justinian had been reproached for his alliance
with the Æthiopians, as if he attempted to in-
troduce a people of savage negroes into the system
of civilized society. But the friends of the Ro-
man empire, the Axumites, or Abyssinians, may
be always distinguished from the original natives
of Africa ”. The hand of nature has flattened
the noses of the negroes, covered their heads

with shaggy wool, and tinged their skin with inherent and indelible blackness. But the olive complexion of the Abyssinians, their hair, shape, and features, distinctly mark them as a colony of Arabs; and this descent is confirmed by the resemblance of language and manners, the report of an ancient emigration, and the narrow interval between the shores of the Red Sea. Christianity had raised that nation above the level of African barbarism⁹³: their intercourse with Egypt, and the successors of Constantine⁹⁴, had communicated the rudiments of the arts and sciences; their vessels traded to the isle of Ceylon⁹⁵, and seven kingdoms obeyed the Negus or supreme prince of Abyssinia. The independence of the Homerites, who reigned in the rich and happy Arabia, was first violated by an Æthiopian conqueror: he drew his hereditary claim from the queen of Sheba⁹⁶, and his ambition was sanctified by religious zeal. The Jews, powerful and active in exile, had seduced the mind of Dunaan, prince of the Homerites. They urged him to retaliate the persecution inflicted by the Imperial laws on their unfortunate brethren: some Roman merchants were injuriously treated; and several Christians of Negra⁹⁷ were honoured with the crown of martyrdom⁹⁸. The churches of Arabia implored the protection of the Abyssinian monarch. The Negus passed the Red Sea with a fleet and army, deprived the Jewish proselyte of his kingdom and life, and extinguished a race of princes, who had ruled above two thousand years the seques-

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Their alli-
ance with
Justinian,
A. D. 533.

tered region of myrrh and frankincense. The conqueror immediately announced the victory of the gospel, requested an orthodox patriarch, and so warmly professed his friendship to the Roman empire, that Justinian was flattered by the hope of diverting the silk-trade through the channel of Abyssinia, and of exciting the forces of Arabia against the Persian king. Nonnosus, descended from a family of ambassadors, was named by the emperor to execute this important commission. He wisely declined the shorter, but more dangerous, road through the sandy deserts of Nubia; ascended the Nile, embarked on the Red Sea, and safely landed at the African port of Adulis. From Adulis to the royal city of Axume it is no more than fifty leagues, in a direct line; but the winding passes of the mountains detained the ambassador fifteen days; and as he traversed the forests, he saw, and vaguely computed, about five thousand wild elephants. The capital, according to his report, was large and populous; and the *village* of Axume is still conspicuous by the regal coronations, by the ruins of a Christian temple, and by sixteen or seventeen obelisks inscribed with Grecian characters⁹⁹. But the Negus gave audience in the open field, seated on a lofty chariot, which was drawn by four elephants superbly caparisoned, and surrounded by his nobles and musicians. He was clad in a linen garment and cap, holding in his hand two javelins and a light shield; and, although his nakedness was imperfectly covered, he displayed the Barbaric

pomp of gold chains, collars, and bracelets, richly adorned with pearls and precious stones. The ambassador of Justinian knelt; the Negus raised him from the ground, embraced Nonnosus, kissed the seal, perused the letter, accepted the Roman alliance, and, brandishing his weapons, denounced implacable war against the worshippers of fire. But the proposal of the silk-trade was eluded; and notwithstanding the assurances, and perhaps the wishes, of the Abyssinians, these hostile menaces evaporated without effect. The Homerites were unwilling to abandon their aromatic groves, to explore a sandy desert, and to encounter, after all their fatigues, a formidable nation from whom they had never received any personal injuries. Instead of enlarging his conquests, the king of Æthiopia was incapable of defending his possessions. Abrahah, the slave of a Roman merchant of Adulis, assumed the sceptre of the Homerites; the troops of Africa were seduced by the luxury of the climate; and Justinian solicited the friendship of the usurper, who honoured, with a slight tribute, the supremacy of his prince. After a long series of prosperity, the power of Abrahah was overthrown before the gates of Mecca; his children were despoiled by the Persian conqueror; and the Æthiopians were finally expelled from the continent of Asia. This narrative of obscure and remote events is not foreign to the decline and fall of the Roman empire. If a Christian power had been maintained

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XLII.

CHAP. in Arabia, Mahomet must have been crushed in
 XLII. his cradle, and Abyffinia would have prevented
 a revolution which has changed the civil and re-
 ligious state of the world.¹⁰⁰

C H A P. XLIII.

Rebellions of Africa. — Restoration of the Gothic Kingdom by Totila. — Loss and Recovery of Rome. — Final Conquest of Italy by Narses. — Extinction of the Ostrogoths. — Defeat of the Franks and Alemanni. — Last Victory, Disgrace, and Death of Belisarius. — Death and Character of Justinian. — Comet, Earthquakes, and Plague.

THE review of the nations from the Danube to the Nile has exposed on every side the weakness of the Romans; and our wonder is reasonably excited that they should presume to enlarge an empire, whose ancient limits they were incapable of defending. But the wars, the conquests, and the triumphs of Justinian, are the feeble and pernicious efforts of old age, which exhaust the remains of strength, and accelerate the decay of the powers of life. He exulted in the glorious act of restoring Africa and Italy to the republic; but the calamities which followed the departure of Belisarius betrayed the impotence of the conqueror, and accomplished the ruin of those unfortunate countries.

From his new acquisitions, Justinian expected that his avarice, as well as pride, should be

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The troubles
of Africa,

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A. D.

535—545.

richly gratified. A rapacious minister of the finances closely pursued the footsteps of Belisarius; and as the old registers of tribute had been burnt by the Vandals, he indulged his fancy in a liberal calculation and arbitrary assessment of the wealth of Africa'. The encrease of taxes, which were drawn away by a distant sovereign, and a general resumption of the patrimony or crown lands, soon dispelled the intoxication of the public joy: but the emperor was insensible to the modest complaints of the people, till he was awakened and alarmed by the clamours of military discontent. Many of the Roman soldiers had married the widows and daughters of the Vandals. As their own, by the double right of conquest and inheritance, they claimed the estates which Genferic had assigned to his victorious troops. They heard with disdain the cold and selfish representations of their officers, that the liberality of Justinian had raised them from a savage or servile condition; that they were already enriched by the spoils of Africa, the treasure, the slaves, and the moveables of the vanquished Barbarians; and that the ancient and lawful patrimony of the emperors would be applied only to the support of that government on which their own safety and reward must ultimately depend. The mutiny was secretly inflamed by a thousand soldiers, for the most part Heruli, who had imbibed the doctrines, and were instigated by the clergy, of the Arian sect; and the cause of perjury and rebellion was sanctified by the dis-

penfing powers of fanaticifm. The Arians deplored the ruin of their church, triumphant above a century in Africa; and they were juftly provoked by the laws of the conqueror, which interdicted the baptifm of their children and the exercife of all religious worfhip. Of the Vandals chofen by Belifarius, the far greater part, in the honours of the Eastern fervice, forgot their country and religion. But a generous band of four hundred obliged the mariners, when they were in fight of the ifle of Lesbos, to alter their courfe: they touched on Peloponnefus, ran afhore on a defert coaft of Africa, and boldly erected, on mount Aurafius, the ftandard of independence and revolt. While the troops of the province difclaimed the commands of their fuperiors, a confpiracy was formed at Carthage againft the life of Solomon, who filled with honour the place of Belifarius, and the Arians had piously refolved to facrifice the tyrant at the foot of the altar, during the awful myfteries of the feftival of Eaftter. Fear or remorse reftained the daggers of the affaffins, but the patience of Solomon emboldened their difcontent; and at the end of ten days, a furious fedition was kindled in the Circus, which defolated Africa above ten years. The pillage of the city, and the indiscriminate flaughter of its inhabitants, were fufpended only by darknefs, fleep, and intoxication: the governor, with feven companions, among whom was the hiftorian Procopius, efaped to Sicily: two thirds of the army were involved in

C H A P. XLIII. the guilt of treason ; and eight thousand insurgents, assembling in the field of Bulla, elected Stoza for their chief, a private foldier, who possessed in a superior degree the virtues of a rebel. Under the mask of freedom, his eloquence could lead, or at least impel, the passions of his equals. He raised himself to a level with Belisarius, and the nephew of the emperor, by daring to encounter them in the field; and the victorious generals were compelled to acknowledge, that Stoza deserved a purer cause and a more legitimate command. Vanquished in battle, he dextrously employed the arts of negociation; a Roman army was seduced from their allegiance, and the chiefs who had trusted to his faithless promise, were murdered by his order in a church of Numidia. When every resource, either of force or perfidy, was exhausted, Stoza, with some desperate Vandals, retired to the wilds of Mauritania, obtained the daughter of a Barbarian prince, and eluded the pursuit of his enemies, by the report of his death. The personal weight of Belisarius, the rank, the spirit, and the temper of Germanus, the emperor's nephew, and the vigour and success of the second administration of the eunuch Solomon, restored the modesty of the camp, and maintained for a while the tranquillity of Africa. But the vices of the Byzantine court were felt in that distant province; the troops complained that they were neither paid nor relieved, and as soon as the public disorders were sufficiently mature, Stoza was

was again alive, in arms, and at the gates of Carthage. He fell in a single combat, but he smiled in the agonies of death, when he was informed that his own javelin had reached the heart of his antagonist. The example of Stoza, and the assurance that a fortunate foldier had been the first king, encouraged the ambition of Gontharis, and he promised, by a private treaty, to divide Africa with the Moors, if, with their dangerous aid, he should ascend the throne of Carthage. The feeble Areobindus, unskilled in the affairs of peace and war, was raised, by his marriage with the niece of Justinian, to the office of Exarch. He was suddenly oppressed by a sedition of the guards, and his abject supplications, which provoked the contempt, could not move the pity, of the inexorable tyrant. After a reign of thirty days, Gontharis himself was stabbed at a banquet by the hand of Artaban; and it is singular enough, that an Armenian prince, of the royal family of Arsaces, should re-establish at Carthage the authority of the Roman empire. In the conspiracy which unsheathed the dagger of Brutus against the life of Cæsar, every circumstance is curious and important to the eyes of posterity: but the guilt or merit of these loyal or rebellious assassins could interest only the contemporaries of Procopius, who, by their hopes and fears, their friendship or resentment, were personally engaged in the revolutions of Africa².

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Rebellion of
the Moors,

A. D.

443—558.

That country was rapidly sinking into the state of barbarism, from whence it had been raised by the Phœnician colonies and Roman laws: and every step of intestine discord was marked by some deplorable victory of savage man over civilized society. The Moors³, though ignorant of justice, were impatient of oppression: their vagrant life and boundless wilderness disappointed the arms, and eluded the chains, of a conqueror; and experience had shewn, that neither oaths nor obligations could secure the fidelity of their attachment. The victory of mount Auras had awed them into momentary submission; but if they respected the character of Solomon, they hated and despised the pride and luxury of his two nephews, Cyrus and Sergius, on whom their uncle had imprudently bestowed the provincial governments of Tripoli and Pentapolis. A Moorish tribe encamped under the walls of Leptis, to renew their alliance, and receive from the governor the customary gifts. Four-score of their deputies were introduced as friends into the city; but on the dark suspicion of a conspiracy, they were massacred at the table of Sergius; and the clamour of arms and revenge was re-echoed through the vallies of mount Atlas, from both the Syrtes to the Atlantic ocean. A personal injury, the unjust execution or murder of his brother, rendered Antalas the enemy of the Romans. The defeat of the Vandals had formerly signalized his valour; the rudiments of justice and prudence were still more conspicuous in a Moor; and while he laid Adrumetum in ashes, he calmly

admonished the emperor that the peace of Africa might be secured by the recall of Solomon and his unworthy nephews. The exarch led forth his troops from Carthage: but, at the distance of six days journey, in the neighbourhood of Tebeste[†], he was astonished by the superior numbers and fierce aspect of the Barbarians. He proposed a treaty; solicited a reconciliation; and offered to bind himself by the most solemn oaths. "By what oaths can he bind himself?" interrupted the indignant Moors. "Will he swear by the gods, the divine books of the Christians? It was on those books that the faith of his nephew Sergius was pledged to eighty of our innocent and unfortunate brethren. Before we trust them a second time, let us try their efficacy in the chastisement of perjury and the vindication of their own honour." Their honour was vindicated in the field of Tebeste, by the death of Solomon, and the total loss of his army. The arrival of fresh troops and more skilful commanders, soon checked the insolence of the Moors; seventeen of their princes were slain in the same battle; and the doubtful and transient submission of their tribes was celebrated with lavish applause by the people of Constantinople. Successive inroads had reduced the province of Africa to one third of the measure of Italy; yet the Roman emperors continued to reign above a century over Carthage, and the fruitful coast of the Mediterranean. But the victories and the losses of Justinian were alike pernicious to mankind;

C H A P. and such was the desolation of Africa, that in
 XLIII. many parts a stranger might wander whole days
 without meeting the face either of a friend or an
 enemy. The nation of the Vandals had disap-
 peared: they once amounted to an hundred and
 sixty thousand warriors, without including the
 children, the women, or the slaves. Their num-
 bers were infinitely surpassed by the number of
 the Moorish families extirpated in a relentless
 war; and the same destruction was retaliated on
 the Romans and their allies, who perished by the
 climate, their mutual quarrels, and the rage of
 the Barbarians. When Procopius first landed,
 he admired the populousness of the cities and
 country, strenuously exercised in the labours of
 commerce and agriculture. In less than twenty
 years, that busy scene was converted into a silent
 solitude; the wealthy citizens escaped to Sicily
 and Constantinople; and the secret historian has
 confidently affirmed, that five millions of Afri-
 cans were consumed by the wars and govern-
 ment of the emperor Justinian ⁵.

Revolt of the
 Goths,
 A. D. 540,

The jealousy of the Byzantine court had not
 permitted Belisarius to atchieve the conquest of
 Italy: and his abrupt departure revived the cou-
 rage of the Goths ⁶, who respected his genius,
 his virtue, and even the laudable motive which
 had urged the servant of Justinian to deceive and
 reject them. They had lost their king (an incon-
 siderable loss), their capital, their treasures, the
 provinces from Sicily to the Alps, and the mili-
 tary force of two hundred thousand Barbarians,

magnificently equipped with horses and arms. Yet all was not lost, as long as Pavia was defended by one thousand Goths, inspired by a sense of honour, the love of freedom, and the memory of their past greatness. The supreme command was unanimously offered to the brave Uraias; and it was in his eyes alone that the disgrace of his uncle Vitiges could appear as a reason of exclusion. His voice inclined the election in favour of Hildibald, whose personal merit was recommended by the vain hope that his kinsman Theudes, the Spanish monarch, would support the common interest of the Gothic nation. The success of his arms in Liguria and Venetia seemed to justify their choice; but he soon declared to the world, that he was incapable of forgiving or commanding his benefactor. The consort of Hildibald was deeply wounded by the beauty, the riches, and the pride of the wife of Uraias; and the death of that virtuous patriot excited the indignation of a free people. A bold assassin executed their sentence, by striking off the head of Hildibald in the midst of a banquet: the Rugians, a foreign tribe, assumed the privilege of election; and Totila, the nephew of the late king, was tempted, by revenge, to deliver himself and the garrison of Trevigo into the hands of the Romans. But the gallant and accomplished youth was easily persuaded to prefer the Gothic throne before the service of Justinian; and as soon as the palace of Pavia had been purified from the Rugian usurper, he reviewed the national force

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Victories of
Totila, king
of Italy,

A. D.

541—544.

of five thousand soldiers, and generously undertook the restoration of the kingdom of Italy.

The successors of Belisarius, eleven generals of equal rank, neglected to crush the feeble and disunited Goths, till they were roused to action by the progress of Totila and the reproaches of Justinian. The gates of Verona were secretly opened to Artabazus, at the head of one hundred Persians in the service of the empire. The Goths fled from the city. At the distance of sixty furlongs the Roman generals halted to regulate the division of the spoil. While they disputed, the enemy discovered the real number of the victors: the Persians were instantly overpowered, and it was by leaping from the wall that Artabazus preserved a life which he lost in a few days by the lance of a Barbarian, who had defied him to single combat. Twenty thousand Romans encountered the forces of Totila, near Faenza, and on the hills of Mugello, of the Florentine territory. The ardour of freedmen, who fought to regain their country, was opposed to the languid temper of mercenary troops, who were even destitute of the merits of strong and well-disciplined servitude. On the first attack they abandoned their ensigns, threw down their arms, and dispersed on all sides with an active speed, which abated the loss, whilst it aggravated the shame, of their defeat. The king of the Goths, who blushed for the baseness of his enemies, pursued with rapid steps the path of honour and victory. Totila passed the Po, traversed the Apennine, suspended the

important conquest of Ravenna, Florence, and Rome, and marched through the heart of Italy, to form the siege, or rather the blockade, of Naples. The Roman chiefs, imprisoned in their respective cities, and accusing each other of the common disgrace, did not presume to disturb his enterprize. But the emperor, alarmed by the distress and danger of his Italian conquests, dispatched to the relief of Naples a fleet of galleys and a body of Thracian and Armenian soldiers. They landed in Sicily, which yielded its copious stores of provisions; but the delays of the new commander, an unwarlike magistrate, protracted the sufferings of the besieged; and the succours, which he dropt with a timid and tardy hand, were successively intercepted by the armed vessels stationed by Totila in the bay of Naples. The principal officer of the Romans was dragged, with a rope round his neck, to the foot of the wall, from whence, with a trembling voice, he exhorted the citizens to implore, like himself, the mercy of the conqueror. They requested a truce, with a promise of surrendering the city, if no effectual relief should appear at the end of thirty days. Instead of *one* month, the audacious Barbarian granted them *three*, in the just confidence that famine would anticipate the term of their capitulation. After the reduction of Naples and Cumæ, the provinces of Lucania, Apulia, and Calabria, submitted to the king of the Goths. Totila led his army to the gates of Rome, pitched his camp at Tibur, or Tivoli, within twenty miles of the

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XLIII.

Contrast of
vice and vir-
tue.

capital, and calmly exhorted the senate and people to compare the tyranny of the Greeks with the blessings of the Gothic reign.

The rapid success of Totila may be partly ascribed to the revolution which three years experience had produced in the sentiments of the Italians. At the command, or at least in the name, of a Catholic emperor, the pope⁷, their spiritual father, had been torn from the Roman church, and either starved or murdered on a desolate island⁸. The virtues of Belisarius were replaced by the various or uniform vices of eleven chiefs, at Rome, Ravenna, Florence, Perugia, Spoleto, &c. who abused their authority for the indulgence of lust or avarice. The improvement of the revenue was committed to Alexander, a subtle scribe, long practised in the fraud and oppression of the Byzantine schools; and whose name of *Psallidion*, the *scissars*⁹, was drawn from the dextrous artifice with which he reduced the size, without defacing the figure, of the gold coin. Instead of expecting the restoration of peace and industry, he imposed an heavy assessment on the fortunes of the Italians. Yet his present or future demands were less odious than a prosecution of arbitrary rigour against the persons and property of all those, who, under the Gothic kings, had been concerned in the receipt and expenditure of the public money. The subjects of Justinian, who escaped these partial vexations, were oppressed by the irregular maintenance of the soldiers, whom Alexander defrauded and despised; and their hasty

fallies in quest of wealth, or subsistence, provoked the inhabitants of the country to await or implore their deliverance from the virtues of a Barbarian. Totila ¹⁹ was chaste and temperate; and none were deceived, either friends or enemies, who depended on his faith or his clemency. To the husbandmen of Italy the Gothic king issued a welcome proclamation, enjoining them to pursue their important labours, and to rest assured, that, on the payment of the ordinary taxes, they should be defended by his valour and discipline from the injuries of war. The strong towns he successively attacked; and as soon as they had yielded to his arms, he demolished the fortifications; to save the people from the calamities of a future siege, to deprive the Romans of the arts of defence, and to decide the tedious quarrel of the two nations, by an equal and honourable conflict in the field of battle. The Roman captives and deserters were tempted to enlist in the service of a liberal and courteous adversary; the slaves were attracted by the firm and faithful promise, that they should never be delivered to their masters; and from the thousand warriors of Pavia, a new people, under the same appellation of Goths, was insensibly formed in the camp of Totila. He sincerely accomplished the articles of capitulation, without seeking or accepting any sinister advantage from ambiguous expressions or unforeseen events: the garrison of Naples had stipulated, that they should be transported by sea; the obstinacy of the winds prevented their voyage,

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but they were generously supplied with horses, provisions, and a safe-conduct to the gates of Rome. The wives of the senators, who had been surprised in the villas of Campania, were restored, without a ransom, to their husbands; the violation of female chastity was inexorably chastised with death; and, in the salutary regulation of the diet of the famished Neapolitans, the conqueror assumed the office of an humane and attentive physician. The virtues of Totila are equally laudable, whether they proceeded from true policy, religious principle, or the instinct of humanity: he often harangued his troops; and it was his constant theme, that national vice and ruin are inseparably connected; that victory is the fruit of moral as well as military virtue; and that the prince, and even the people, are responsible for the crimes which they neglect to punish.

Second com-
mand of Be-
lisarius in
Italy,

A. D.

544—548.

The return of Belisarius to save the country which he had subdued, was pressed with equal vehemence by his friends and enemies; and the Gothic war was imposed as a trust or an exile on the veteran commander. An hero on the banks of the Euphrates, a slave in the palace of Constantinople, he accepted, with reluctance, the painful task of supporting his own reputation, and retrieving the faults of his successors. The sea was open to the Romans: the ships and soldiers were assembled at Salona, near the palace of Diocletian; he refreshed and reviewed his troops at Pola in Istria, coasted round the head of the Adriatic, entered the port of Ravenna, and dis-

patched orders, rather than supplies, to the subordinate cities. His first public oration was addressed to the Goths and Romans, in the name of the emperor, who had suspended for a while the conquest of Persia, and listened to the prayers of his Italian subjects. He gently touched on the causes and the authors of the recent disasters; striving to remove the fear of punishment for the past, and the hope of impunity for the future, and labouring, with more zeal than success, to unite all the members of his government in a firm league of affection and obedience. Justinian, his gracious master, was inclined to pardon and reward; and it was their interest, as well as duty, to reclaim their deluded brethren who had been seduced by the arts of the usurper. Not a man was tempted to desert the standard of the Gothic king. Belisarius soon discovered, that he was sent to remain the idle and impotent spectator of the glory of a young Barbarian; and his own epistle exhibits a genuine and lively picture of the distress of a noble mind.

“ Most excellent prince, we are arrived in Italy,
 “ destitute of all the necessary implements of war,
 “ men, horses, arms, and money. In our late
 “ circuit through the villages of Thrace and Illy-
 “ ricum, we have collected, with extreme diffi-
 “ culty, about four thousand recruits, naked, and
 “ unskilled in the use of weapons and the exerci-
 “ ses of the camp. The soldiers already stationed
 “ in the province are discontented, fearful, and
 “ dismayed; at the sound of an enemy, they dis-
 “ miss their horses, and cast their arms on the

CHAP. XLIII. "ground. No taxes can be raised, since Italy is
 "in the hands of the Barbarians: the failure of
 "payment has deprived us of the right of com-
 "mand, or even of admonition. Be assured,
 "dread sir, that the greater part of your troops
 "have already deserted to the Goths. If the war
 "could be atchieved by the presence of Belisa-
 "rius alone, your wishes are satisfied; Belisarius
 "is in the midst of Italy. But if you desire to
 "conquer, far other preparations are requisite;
 "without a military force, the title of general
 "is an empty name. It would be expedient to
 "restore to my service my own veterans and do-
 "mestic guards. Before I can take the field, I
 "must receive an adequate supply of light and
 "heavy armed troops; and it is only with ready
 "money that you can procure the indispensable
 "aid of a powerful body of the cavalry of the
 "Huns".

An officer in whom Belisarius con-
 fided was sent from Ravenna to hasten and con-
 duct the succours; but the message was neglected,
 and the messenger was detained at Constantino-
 ple by an advantageous marriage. After his pa-
 tience had been exhausted by delay and disap-
 pointment, the Roman general repassed the Ha-
 driatic, and expected at Dyrrachium the arrival
 of the troops, which were slowly assembled
 among the subjects and allies of the empire. His
 powers were still inadequate to the deliverance
 of Rome, which was closely besieged by the Go-
 thic king. The Appian way, a march of forty
 days, was covered by the Barbarians; and as the

prudence of Belisarius declined a battle, he preferred the safe and speedy navigation of five days from the coast of Epirus to the mouth of the Tyber. C H A P.
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After reducing by force, or treaty, the towns of inferior note in the midland provinces of Italy, Totila proceeded, not to assault, but to encompass and starve the ancient capital. Rome was afflicted by the avarice, and guarded by the valour, of Bessas, a veteran chief of Gothic extraction, who filled, with a garrison of three thousand foldiers, the spacious circle of her venerable walls. From the distress of the people he extracted a profitable trade, and secretly rejoiced in the continuance of the siege. It was for his use that the granaries had been replenished: the charity of pope Vigilius had purchased and embarked an ample supply of Sicilian corn; but the vessels which escaped the Barbarians were seized by a rapacious governor, who imparted a scanty sustenance to the foldiers, and sold the remainder to the wealthy Romans. The medimnus, or fifth part of the quarter of wheat, was exchanged for seven pieces of gold; fifty pieces were given for an ox, a rare and accidental prize; the progress of famine enhanced this exorbitant value, and the mercenaries were tempted to deprive themselves of the allowance which was scarcely sufficient for the support of life. A tasteless and unwholesome mixture, in which the bran thrice exceeded the quantity of flour, appeased the hunger of the poor; they were gradually reduced to feed on dead horses.

Rome besieged by the Goths,
A. D. 545,
May.

CHAP

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dogs, cats, and mice, and eagerly to snatch the
 grass, and even the nettles which grew among
 the ruins of the city. A crowd of spectres, pale
 and emaciated, their bodies oppressed with dis-
 ease, and their minds with despair, surrounded
 the palace of the governor, urged, with unavail-
 ing truth, that it was the duty of a master to
 maintain his slaves, and humbly requested, that
 he would provide for their subsistence, permit
 their flight, or command their immediate execu-
 tion. Bessas replied, with unfeeling tranquillity,
 that it was impossible to feed, unsafe to dismiss,
 and unlawful to kill, the subjects of the emperor.
 Yet the example of a private citizen might have
 shewn his countrymen that a tyrant cannot with-
 hold the privilege of death. Pierced by the cries
 of five children, who vainly called on their father
 for bread, he ordered them to follow his steps,
 advanced with calm and silent despair to one of
 the bridges of the Tyber, and, covering his
 face, threw himself headlong into the stream, in
 the presence of his family and the Roman people.
 To the rich and pusillanimous, Bessas¹² sold the
 permission of departure; but the greatest part of
 the fugitives expired on the public highways, or
 were intercepted by the flying parties of Barbari-
 ans. In the mean while, the artful governor
 soothed the discontent, and revived the hopes,
 of the Romans, by the vague reports of the
 fleets and armies which were hastening to their
 relief from the extremities of the East. They
 derived more rational comfort from the assurance

that Belisarius had landed at the *port*; and, without numbering his forces, they firmly relied on the humanity, the courage, and the skill of their great deliverer.

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The foresight of Totila had raised obstacles worthy of such an antagonist. Ninety furlongs below the city, in the narrowest part of the river, he joined the two banks by strong and solid timbers in the form of a bridge; on which he erected two lofty towers, manned by the bravest of his Goths, and profusely stored with missile weapons and engines of offence. The approach of the bridge and towers was covered by a strong and massy chain of iron; and the chain, at either end, on the opposite sides of the Tyber, was defended by a numerous and chosen detachment of archers. But the enterprise of forcing these barriers, and relieving the capital, displays a shining example of the boldness and conduct of Belisarius. His cavalry advanced from the port along the public road, to awe the motions, and distract the attention, of the enemy. His infantry and provisions were distributed in two hundred large boats; and each boat was shielded by an high rampart of thick planks, pierced with many small holes for the discharge of missile weapons. In the front, two large vessels were linked together to sustain a floating castle, which commanded the towers of the bridge, and contained a magazine of fire, sulphur, and bitumen. The whole fleet, which the general led in person, was laboriously moved against the current of the

Attempt of
Belisarius.

C H A P. river. The chain yielded to their weight, and
 XLIII. the enemies who guarded the banks were either
 slain or scattered. As soon as they touched the
 principal barrier, the fire-ship was instantly
 grappled to the bridge; one of the towers, with
 two hundred Goths, was consumed by the
 flames; the assailants shouted victory; and Rome
 was saved, if the wisdom of Belisarius had not
 been defeated by the misconduct of his officers.
 He had previously sent orders to Bessas to second
 his operations by a timely sally from the town;
 and he had fixed his lieutenant, Isaac, by a
 peremptory command, to the station of the port.
 But avarice rendered Bessas immovable; while
 the youthful ardour of Isaac delivered him into
 the hands of a superior enemy. The exaggerated
 rumour of his defeat was hastily carried to the
 ears of Belisarius: he paused; betrayed in that
 single moment of his life some emotions of sur-
 prise and perplexity; and reluctantly founded a
 retreat to save his wife Antonina, his treasures,
 and the only harbour which he possessed on the
 Tuscan coast. The vexation of his mind produc-
 ed an ardent and almost mortal fever; and Rome
 was left without protection to the mercy or
 indignation of Totila. The continuance of hostili-
 ties had embittered the national hatred: the Arian
 clergy was ignominiously driven from Rome;
 Pelagius, the archdeacon, returned without
 success from an embassy to the Gothic camp; and
 a Sicilian bishop, the envoy or nuncio of the
 pope, was deprived of both his hands, for daring
 to

to utter falsehoods in the service of the church and state. C H A P.
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Famine had relaxed the strength and discipline of the garrison of Rome. They could derive no effectual service from a dying people; and the inhuman avarice of the merchant at length absorbed the vigilance of the governor. Four Isaurian centinels, while their companions slept, and their officers were absent, descended by a rope from the wall, and secretly proposed to the Gothic king to introduce his troops into the city. The offer was entertained with coldness and suspicion; they returned in safety; they twice repeated their visit; the place was twice examined; the conspiracy was known and disregarded; and no sooner had Totila consented to the attempt, than they unbarred the Asinarian gate, and gave admittance to the Goths. Till the dawn of day, they halted in order of battle, apprehensive of treachery or ambush; but the troops of Bessas, with their leader, had already escaped; and when the king was pressed to disturb their retreat, he prudently replied, that no fight could be more grateful than that of a flying enemy. The patricians, who were still possessed of horses, Decius, Basilus, &c. accompanied the governor; their brethren, among whom Olybrius, Orestes, and Maximus, are named by the historian, took refuge in the church of S. Peter: but the assertion, that only five hundred persons remained in the capital, inspires some doubt of the fidelity either of his narrative or of his text. As soon as day-

Rome taken
by the Goths,
A. D. 546,
Dec. 17.

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light had displayed the entire victory of the Goths, their monarch devoutly visited the tomb of the prince of the apostles; but while he prayed at the altar, twenty-five soldiers, and sixty citizens, were put to the sword in the vestibule of the temple. The archdeacon Pelagius¹ stood before him with the gospels in his hand. "O Lord, be merciful to your servant." "Pelagius," said Totila, with an insulting smile, "your pride now condescends to become a suppliant." "I *am* a suppliant," replied the prudent archdeacon; "God has now made us your subjects; and, as your subjects, we are entitled to your clemency." At his humble prayer, the lives of the Romans were spared; and the chastity of the maids and matrons was preserved inviolate from the passions of the hungry soldiers. But they were rewarded by the freedom of pillage, after the most precious spoils had been reserved for the royal treasury. The houses of the senators were plentifully stored with gold and silver; and the avarice of Bessas had laboured with so much guilt and shame for the benefit of the conqueror. In this revolution, the sons and daughters of Roman consuls tasted the misery which they had spurned or relieved, wandered in tattered garments through the streets of the city, and begged their bread, perhaps without success, before the gates of their hereditary mansions. The riches of Rusticiana, the daughter of Symmachus and widow of Boethius, had been generously devoted to alleviate the calamities of famine. But the Barbarians were exasperated by

the report, that she had prompted the people to overthrow the statues of the great Theodoric; and the life of that venerable matron would have been sacrificed to his memory, if Totila had not respected her birth, her virtues, and even the pious motive of her revenge. The next day he pronounced two orations, to congratulate and admonish his victorious Goths, and to reproach the senate, as the vilest of slaves, with their perjury, folly, and ingratitude; sternly declaring, that their estates and honours were justly forfeited to the companions of his arms. Yet he consented to forgive their revolt, and the senators repaid his clemency by dispatching circular letters to their tenants and vassals in the provinces of Italy, strictly to enjoin them to desert the standard of the Greeks, to cultivate their lands in peace, and to learn from their masters the duty of obedience to a Gothic sovereign. Against the city which had so long delayed the course of his victories he appeared inexorable: one-third of the walls, in different parts, were demolished by his command; fire and engines prepared to consume or subvert the most stately works of antiquity; and the world was astonished by the fatal decree, that Rome should be changed into a pasture for cattle. The firm and temperate remonstrance of Belisarius suspended the execution; he warned the Barbarian not to sully his fame by the destruction of those monuments which were the glory of the dead, and the delight of the living; and Totila was persuaded, by the

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advice of an enemy, to preserve Rome as the ornament of his kingdom, or the fairest pledge of peace and reconciliation. When he had signified to the ambassadors of Belisarius, his intention of sparing the city, he stationed an army at the distance of one hundred and twenty furlongs, to observe the motions of the Roman general. With the remainder of his forces, he marched into Lucania and Apulia, and occupied on the summit of mount Garganus¹⁴ one of the camps of Hannibal¹⁵. The senators were dragged in his train, and afterwards confined in the fortresses of Campania: the citizens, with their wives and children, were dispersed in exile; and during forty days Rome was abandoned to desolate and dreary solitude¹⁶.

Recovered by
Belisarius,
A. D. 547,
February.

The loss of Rome was speedily retrieved by an action, to which, according to the event, the public opinion would apply the names of rashness or heroism. After the departure of Totila, the Roman general sallied from the port at the head of a thousand horse, cut in pieces the enemy who opposed his progress, and visited with pity and reverence the vacant space of the *eternal* city. Resolved to maintain a station so conspicuous in the eyes of mankind, he summoned the greatest part of his troops to the standard which he erected on the Capitol: the old inhabitants were recalled by the love of their country and the hopes of food; and the keys of Rome were sent, a second time, to the emperor Justinian. The walls, as far as they had been demolished by the Goths,

were repaired with rude and dissimilar materials; the ditch was restored; iron spikes¹⁷ were profusely scattered in the highways to annoy the feet of the horses; and as new gates could not suddenly be procured, the entrance was guarded by a Spartan rampart of his bravest foldiers. At the expiration of twenty-five days, Totila returned by hasty marches from Apulia, to avenge the injury and disgrace. Belisarius expected his approach. The Goths were thrice repulsed in three general assaults; they lost the flower of their troops; the royal standard had almost fallen into the hands of the enemy, and the fame of Totila sunk, as it had risen, with the fortune of his arms. Whatever skill and courage could atchieve, had been performed by the Roman general: it remained only, that Justinian should terminate, by a strong and seasonable effort, the war which he had ambitiously undertaken. The indolence, perhaps the impotence, of a prince who despised his enemies, and envied his servants, protracted the calamities of Italy. After a long silence, Belisarius was commanded to leave a sufficient garrison at Rome, and to transport himself into the province of Lucania, whose inhabitants, inflamed by Catholic zeal, had cast away the yoke of their Arian conquerors. In this ignoble warfare, the hero, invincible against the power of the Barbarians, was basely vanquished by the delay, the disobedience, and the cowardice of his own officers. He reposed in his winter-quarters of Crotona, in the full assurance, that the two passes

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of the Lucanian hills were guarded by his cavalry. They were betrayed by treachery or weakness; and the rapid march of the Goths scarcely allowed time for the escape of Belisarius to the coast of Sicily. At length a fleet and army were assembled for the relief of Ruscianum, or Rossano¹⁸, a fortress sixty furlongs from the ruins of Sybaris, where the nobles of Lucania had taken refuge. In the first attempt, the Roman forces were dissipated by a storm. In the second they approached the shore; but they saw the hills covered with archers, the landing-place defended by a line of spears, and the king of the Goths impatient for battle. The conqueror of Italy retired with a sigh, and continued to languish, inglorious and inactive, till Antonina, who had been sent to Constantinople to solicit succours, obtained, after the death of the empress, the permission of his return.

Final recall of
Belisarius,
A. D. 548,
September.

The five last campaigns of Belisarius might abate the envy of his competitors, whose eyes had been dazzled and wounded by the blaze of his former glory. Instead of delivering Italy from the Goths, he had wandered like a fugitive along the coast, without daring to march into the country, or to accept the bold and repeated challenge of Totila. Yet in the judgment of the few who could discriminate counsels from events, and compare the instruments with the execution, he appeared a more consummate master of the art of war, than in the season of his prosperity, when he presented two captive kings before the throne

of Justinian. The valour of Belisarius was not chilled by age; his prudence was matured by experience, but the moral virtues of humanity and justice seem to have yielded to the hard necessity of the times. The parsimony or poverty of the emperor compelled him to deviate from the rule of conduct which had deserved the love and confidence of the Italians. The war was maintained by the oppression of Ravenna, Sicily, and all the faithful subjects of the empire; and the rigorous prosecution of Herodian provoked that injured or guilty officer to deliver Spoleto into the hands of the enemy. The avarice of Antonina, which had been sometimes diverted by love, now reigned without a rival in her breast. Belisarius himself had always understood, that riches, in a corrupt age, are the support and ornament of personal merit. And it cannot be presumed that he should stain his honour for the public service, without applying a part of the spoil to his private emolument. The hero had escaped the sword of the Barbarians, but the dagger of conspiracy¹⁹ awaited his return. In the midst of wealth and honours, Artaban, who had chastised the African tyrant, complained of the ingratitude of courts. He aspired to Præjecta, the emperor's niece, who wished to reward her deliverer; but the impediment of his previous marriage was asserted by the piety of Theodora. The pride of royal descent was irritated by flattery; and the service in which he gloried, had proved him capable of bold and sanguinary deeds. The death of

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Justinian was resolved, but the conspirators delayed the execution till they could surprise Belisarius disarmed, and naked, in the palace of Constantinople. Not a hope could be entertained of shaking his long-tryed fidelity; and they justly dreaded the revenge, or rather justice, of the veteran general, who might speedily assemble an army in Thrace to punish the assassins, and perhaps to enjoy the fruits of their crime. Delay afforded time for rash communications and honest confessions: Artaban and his accomplices were condemned by the senate, but the extreme clemency of Justinian detained them in the gentle confinement of the palace, till he pardoned their flagitious attempt against his throne and life. If the emperor forgave his enemies, he must cordially embrace a friend whose victories were alone remembered, and who was endeared to his prince by the recent circumstance of their common danger. Belisarius reposed from his toils, in the high station of general of the East and count of the domestics; and the older consuls and patricians respectfully yielded the precedency of rank to the peerless merit of the first of the Romans²⁰. The first of the Romans still submitted to be the slave of his wife; but the servitude of habit and affection became less disgraceful when the death of Theodora had removed the baser influence of fear. Joannina their daughter, and the sole heiress of their fortunes, was betrothed to Anastasius the grandson, or rather the nephew, of the empress²¹.

whose kind interposition forwarded the consum-
 mation of their youthful loves. But the power
 of Theodora expired, the parents of Joannina
 returned, and her honour, perhaps her happiness,
 were sacrificed to the revenge of an unfeeling
 mother, who dissolved the imperfect nuptials
 before they had been ratified by the ceremonies
 of the church ²².

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Before the departure of Belisarius, Perugia was
 besieged, and few cities were impregnable to the
 Gothic arms. Ravenna, Ancona, and Crotona,
 still resisted the Barbarians; and when Totila
 asked in marriage one of the daughters of France,
 he was stung by the just reproach that the king
 of Italy was unworthy of his title till it was
 acknowledged by the Roman people. Three
 thousand of the bravest soldiers had been left
 to defend the capital. On the suspicion of a
 monopoly, they massacred the governor, and
 announced to Justinian, by a deputation of the
 clergy, that unless their offence was pardoned,
 and their arrears were satisfied, they should in-
 stantly accept the tempting offers of Totila. But
 the officer who succeeded to the command (his
 name was Diogenes) deserved their esteem and
 confidence; and the Goths, instead of finding an
 easy conquest, encountered a vigorous resistance
 from the soldiers and people, who patiently
 endured the loss of the port, and of all maritime
 supplies. The siege of Rome would perhaps
 have been raised, if the liberality of Totila to
 the Isaurians had not encouraged some of their

Rome again
 taken by the
 Goths,
 A. D. 549.

CHAP. venal countrymen to copy the example of treason.
 XLIII. In a dark night, while the Gothic trumpets sounded on another side, they silently opened the gate of St. Paul: the Barbarians rushed into the city; and the flying garrison was intercepted before they could reach the harbour of Centumcellæ. A soldier trained in the school of Belisarius, Paul of Cilicia, retired with four hundred men to the mole of Hadrian. They repelled the Goths; but they felt the approach of famine; and their aversion to the taste of horse-flesh confirmed their resolution to risk the event of a desperate and decisive fall. But their spirit insensibly stooped to the offers of capitulation: they retrieved their arrears of pay, and preserved their arms and horses, by enlisting in the service of Totila; their chiefs, who pleaded a laudable attachment to their wives and children in the East, were dismissed with honour; and above four hundred enemies, who had taken refuge in the sanctuaries, were saved by the clemency of the victor. He no longer entertained a wish of destroying the edifices of Rome²³, which he now respected as the seat of the Gothic kingdom: the senate and people were restored to their country; the means of subsistence were liberally provided; and Totila, in the robe of peace, exhibited the equestrian games of the circus. Whilst he amused the eyes of the multitude, four hundred vessels were prepared for the embarkation of his troops. The cities of Rhegium and Tarentum were reduced: he passed into Sicily, the object of his implacable resent-

ment; and the island was stripped of its gold and silver, of the fruits of the earth, and of an infinite number of horses, sheep, and oxen. Sardinia and Corsica obeyed the fortune of Italy; and the sea-coast of Greece was visited by a fleet of three hundred gallies ²⁴. The Goths were landed in Corcyra and the ancient continent of Epirus; they advanced as far as Nicopolis, the trophy of Augustus, and Dodona ²⁵, once famous by the oracle of Jove. In every step of his victories, the wise Barbarian repeated to Justinian his desire of peace, applauded the concord of their predecessors, and offered to employ the Gothic arms in the service of the empire.

Justinian was deaf to the voice of peace; but he neglected the prosecution of war; and the indolence of his temper disappointed in some degree the obstinacy of his passions. From this salutary slumber the emperor was awakened by the pope Vigilius and the patrician Cethegus, who appeared before his throne, and adjured him, in the name of God and the people, to resume the conquest and deliverance of Italy. In the choice of the generals, caprice, as well as judgment, was shewn. A fleet and army sailed for the relief of Sicily, under the conduct of Liberius; but his want of youth and experience were afterwards discovered, and before he touched the shores of the island he was overtaken by his successor. In the place of Liberius the conspirator Artaban was raised from a prison to military honours; in the pious presumption, that gratitude would animate

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Preparations
of Justinian
for the
Gothic war,
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his valour and fortify his allegiance. Belisarius reposed in the shade of his laurels, but the command of the principal army was reserved for Germanus²⁶, the emperor's nephew, whose rank and merit had been long depressed by the jealousy of the court. Theodora had injured him in the rights of a private citizen, the marriage of his children, and the testament of his brother; and although his conduct was pure and blameless, Justinian was displeased that he should be thought worthy of the confidence of the malecontents. The life of Germanus was a lesson of implicit obedience: he nobly refused to prostitute his name and character in the factions of the circus: the gravity of his manners was tempered by innocent cheerfulness; and his riches were lent without interest to indigent or deserving friends. His valour had formerly triumphed over the Slavonians of the Danube and the rebels of Africa: the first report of his promotion revived the hopes of the Italians; and he was privately assured, that a crowd of Roman deserters would abandon, on his approach, the standard of Totila. His second marriage with Malafontha, the grand-daughter of Theodoric, endeared Germanus to the Goths themselves; and they marched with reluctance against the father of a royal infant, the last offspring of the line of Amali²⁷. A splendid allowance was assigned by the emperor: the general contributed his private fortune; his two sons were popular and active; and he surpassed, in the promptitude and success of his levies, the ex-

pectation of mankind. He was permitted to select some squadrons of Thracian cavalry: the veterans, as well as the youth of Constantinople and Europe, engaged their voluntary service; and as far as the heart of Germany, his fame and liberality attracted the aid of the Barbarians. The Romans advanced to Sardica; an army of Slavonians fled before their march, but within two days of their final departure, the designs of Germanus were terminated by his malady and death. Yet the impulse which he had given to the Italian war still continued to act with energy and effect. The maritime towns, Ancona, Crotona, Centumcellæ, resisted the assaults of Totila. Sicily was reduced by the zeal of Artaban, and the Gothic navy was defeated near the coast of the Adriatic. The two fleets were almost equal, forty-seven to fifty gallies: the victory was decided by the knowledge and dexterity of the Greeks; but the ships were so closely grappled, that only twelve of the Goths escaped from this unfortunate conflict. They affected to depreciate an element in which they were unskilled, but their own experience confirmed the truth of a maxim, that the master of the sea will always acquire the dominion of the land ²⁸.

After the loss of Germanus, the nations were provoked to smile, by the strange intelligence, that the command of the Roman armies was given to an eunuch. But the eunuch Narses ²⁹ is ranked among the few who have rescued that unhappy name from the contempt and hatred of

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Character
and expedi-
tion of the
eunuch Nar-
ses,
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mankind. A feeble diminutive body concealed the soul of a statesman and a warrior. His youth had been employed in the management of the loom and distaff, in the cares of the household, and the service of female luxury; but while his hands were busy, he secretly exercised the faculties of a vigorous and discerning mind. A stranger to the schools and the camp, he studied in the palace to dissemble, to flatter, and to persuade; and as soon as he approached the person of the emperor, Justinian listened with surprise and pleasure to the manly counsels of his chamberlain and private treasurer³⁰. The talents of Narses were tried and improved in frequent embassies; he led an army into Italy, acquired a practical knowledge of the war and the country, and presumed to strive with the genius of Belisarius. Twelve years after his return, the eunuch was chosen to achieve the conquest which had been left imperfect by the first of the Roman generals. Instead of being dazzled by vanity or emulation, he seriously declared, that unless he were armed with an adequate force, he would never consent to risk his own glory, and that of his sovereign. Justinian granted to the favourite, what he might have denied to the hero: the Gothic war was rekindled from its ashes, and the preparations were not unworthy of the ancient majesty of the empire. The key of the public treasure was put into his hand, to collect magazines, to levy soldiers, to purchase arms and horses, to discharge the arrears of pay, and to tempt

the fidelity of the fugitives and deserters. The troops of Germanus were still in arms; they halted at Salona in the expectation of a new leader; and legions of subjects and allies were created by the well-known liberality of the eunuch Narses. The king of the Lombards ³¹ satisfied or surpassed the obligations of a treaty, by lending two thousand two hundred of his bravest warriors, who were followed by three thousand of their martial attendants. Three thousand Heruli fought on horseback under Philemuth, their native chief; and the noble Aratus, who adopted the manners and discipline of Rome, conducted a band of veterans of the same nation. Dagistheus was released from prison to command the Huns; and Kobad, the grandson and nephew of the great king, was conspicuous by the regal tiara at the head of his faithful Persians, who had devoted themselves to the fortunes of their prince ³². Absolute in the exercise of his authority, more absolute in the affection of his troops, Narses led a numerous and gallant army from Philippopolis to Salona, from whence he coasted the eastern side of the Hadriatic as far as the confines of Italy. His progress was checked. The East could not supply vessels capable of transporting such multitudes of men and horses. The Franks, who, in the general confusion, had usurped the greater part of the Venetian province, refused a free passage to the friends of the Lombards. The station of Verona was occupied by Teias, with the flower of the Gothic forces; and that skilful commander had overspread the adjacent country with

C H A P. the fall of woods and the inundation of waters³³.

XLIII. In this perplexity, an officer of experience proposed a measure, secure by the appearance of rashness; that the Roman army should cautiously advance along the sea-shore, while the fleet preceded their march, and successively cast a bridge of boats over the mouths of the rivers, the Timavus, the Brenta, the Adige, and the Po, that fall into the Hadriatic to the north of Ravenna. Nine days he reposed in the city, collected the fragments of the Italian army, and marched towards Rimini to meet the defiance of an insulting enemy.

Defeat and
death of To-
tila,
A. D. 552,
July.

The prudence of Narses impelled him to speedy and decisive action. His powers were the last effort of the state: the cost of each day accumulated the enormous account; and the nations, untrained to discipline or fatigue, might be rashly provoked to turn their arms against each other, or against their benefactor. The same considerations might have tempered the ardour of Totila. But he was conscious, that the clergy and people of Italy aspired to a second revolution: he felt or suspected the rapid progress of treason, and he resolved to risk the Gothic kingdom on the chance of a day, in which the valiant would be animated by instant danger, and the disaffected might be awed by mutual ignorance. In his march from Ravenna, the Roman general chastised the garrison of Rimini, traversed in a direct line the hills of Urbino, and re-entered the Flaminian way, nine miles beyond the perforated rock, an obstacle of
art.

art and nature which might have stopped or retarded his progress ³⁴. The Goths were assembled in the neighbourhood of Rome, they advanced without delay to seek a superior enemy, and the two armies approached each other at the distance of one hundred furlongs, between Tagina ³⁵ and the sepulchres of the Gauls ³⁶. The haughty message of Narfes was an offer, not of peace, but of pardon. The answer of the Gothic king declared his resolution, to die or conquer. "What day," said the messenger, "will you fix for the combat?" "The eighth day," replied Totila: but early the next morning he attempted to surprise a foe, suspicious of deceit, and prepared for battle. Ten thousand Heruli and Lombards, of approved valour and doubtful faith, were placed in the centre. Each of the wings was composed of eight thousand Romans; the right was guarded by the cavalry of the Huns, the left was covered by fifteen hundred chosen horse, destined, according to the emergencies of action, to sustain the retreat of their friends, or to encompass the flank of the enemy. From his proper station at the head of the right wing, the eunuch rode along the line, expressing by his voice and countenance the assurance of victory; exciting the soldiers of the emperor to punish the guilt and madness of a band of robbers; and exposing to their view, gold chains, collars, and bracelets, the rewards of military virtue. From the event of a single combat, they drew an omen of success; and they beheld with pleasure the cou-

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rage of fifty archers, who maintained a small eminence against three successive attacks of the Gothic cavalry. At the distance only of two bowshots, the armies spent the morning in dreadful suspense, and the Romans tasted some necessary food, without unloosening the cuirass from their breast, or the bridle from their horses. Narses awaited the charge; and it was delayed by Totila till he had received his last succours of two thousand Goths. While he consumed the hours in fruitless treaty, the king exhibited in a narrow space the strength and agility of a warrior. His armour was enchased with gold; his purple banner floated with the wind: he cast his lance into the air; caught it with the right hand; shifted it to the left; threw himself backwards; recovered his seat; and managed a fiery steed in all the paces and evolutions of the equestrian school. As soon as the succours had arrived, he retired to his tent, assumed the dress and arms of a private soldier, and gave the signal of battle. The first line of cavalry advanced with more courage than discretion, and left behind them the infantry of the second line. They were soon engaged between the horns of a crescent, into which the adverse wings had been insensibly curved, and were saluted from either side by the volleys of four thousand archers. Their ardour, and even their distress, drove them forwards to a close and unequal conflict, in which they could only use their lances against an enemy equally skilled in all the instruments of war. A generous emulation inspired the

Romans and their Barbarian allies; and Narfes, who calmly viewed and directed their efforts, doubted to whom he should adjudge the prize of superior bravery. The Gothic cavalry was astonished and disordered, pressed and broken, and the line of infantry, instead of presenting their spears, or opening their intervals, were trampled under the feet of the flying horse. Six thousand of the Goths were slaughtered, without mercy, in the field of Tagina. Their prince, with five attendants, was overtaken by Asbad, of the race of the Gepidæ; "Spare the king of Italy", cried a loyal voice, and Asbad struck his lance through the body of Totila. The blow was instantly revenged by the faithful Goths; they transported their dying monarch seven miles beyond the scene of his disgrace; and his last moments were not embittered by the presence of an enemy. Compassion afforded him the shelter of an obscure tomb; but the Romans were not satisfied of their victory, till they beheld the corpse of the Gothic king. His hat, enriched with gems, and his bloody robe, were presented to Justinian by the messengers of triumph³⁷.

As soon as Narfes had paid his devotions to the Author of victory, and the blessed Virgin, his peculiar patroness³⁸, he praised, rewarded, and dismissed the Lombards. The villages had been reduced to ashes by these valiant savages; they ravished matrons and virgins on the altar; their retreat was diligently watched by a strong detachment of regular forces, who prevented a

Conquest of
Rome by
Narfes.

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repetition of the like disorders. The victorious eunuch pursued his march through Tuscany, accepted the submission of the Goths, heard the acclamations, and often the complaints of the Italians, and encompassed the walls of Rome with the remainder of his formidable host. Round the wide circumference, Narses assigned to himself, and to each of his lieutenants, a real or a feigned attack, while he silently marked the place of easy and unguarded entrance. Neither the fortifications of Hadrian's mole, nor of the port, could long delay the progress of the conqueror; and Justinian once more received the keys of Rome, which, under his reign, had been *five* times taken and recovered". But the deliverance of Rome was the last calamity of the Roman people. The Barbarian allies of Narses too frequently confounded the privileges of peace and war: the despair of the flying Goths found some consolation in sanguinary revenge, and three hundred youths of the noblest families, who had been sent as hostages beyond the Po, were inhumanly slain by the successor of Totila. The fate of the senate suggests an awful lesson of the vicissitude of human affairs. Of the senators whom Totila had banished from their country, some were rescued by an officer of Belisarius, and transported from Campania to Sicily; while others were too guilty to confide in the clemency of Justinian, or too poor to provide horses for their escape to the seashore. Their brethren languished five years in a state of indigence and exile: the victory of Narses revived

their hopes; but their premature return to the metropolis was prevented by the furious Goths; and all the fortresses of Campania were stained with patrician⁴⁰ blood. After a period of thirteen centuries, the institution of Romulus expired; and if the nobles of Rome still assumed the title of senators, few subsequent traces can be discovered of a public council, or constitutional order. Ascend six hundred years, and contemplate the kings of the earth soliciting an audience, as the slaves or freedmen of the Roman Senate⁴¹!

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The Gothic war was yet alive. The bravest of the nation retired beyond the Po; and Teias was unanimously chosen to succeed and revenge their departed hero. Their new king immediately sent ambassadors to implore, or rather to purchase, the aid of the Franks, and nobly lavished for the public safety, the riches which had been deposited in the palace of Pavia. The residue of the royal treasure was guarded by his brother Aligern, at Cuma in Campania; but the strong castle which Totila had fortified, was closely besieged by the arms of Narfes. From the Alps to the foot of mount Vesuvius, the Gothic king, by rapid and secret marches, advanced to the relief of his brother, eluded the vigilance of the Roman chiefs, and pitched his camp on the banks of the Sarnus or *Draco*⁴², which flows from Nuceria into the bay of Naples. The river separated the two armies; sixty days were consumed in distant and fruitless combats, and Teias maintained this important post, till he was deserted by his fleet

Defeat and death of Teias, the last king of the Goths, A. D. 553, March.

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and the hope of subsistence. With reluctant steps he ascended the *Lactarian* mount, where the physicians of Rome, since the time of Galen, had sent their patients for the benefit of the air and the milk⁴³. But the Goths soon embraced a more generous resolution: to descend the hill, to dismiss their horses, and to die in arms, and in the possession of freedom. The king marched at their head, bearing in his right-hand a lance, and an ample buckler in his left: with the one he struck dead the foremost of the assailants; with the other, he received the weapons which every hand was ambitious to aim against his life. After a combat of many hours, his left arm was fatigued by the weight of twelve javelins which hung from his shield. Without moving from his ground, or suspending his blows, the hero called aloud on his attendants for a fresh buckler, but in the moment, while his side was uncovered, it was pierced by a mortal dart. He fell: and his head, exalted on a spear, proclaimed to the nations, that the Gothic kingdom was no more. But the example of his death served only to animate the companions who had sworn to perish with their leader. They fought till darkness descended on the earth. They reposed on their arms. The combat was renewed with the return of light, and maintained with unabated vigour till the evening of the second day. The repose of a second night, the want of water, and the loss of their bravest champions, determined the surviving Goths to accept the fair capitulation which the prudence of Narses was incli-

ned to propose. They embraced the alternative of residing in Italy as the subjects and soldiers of Justinian, or departing with a portion of their private wealth, in search of some independent country⁴⁴. Yet the oath of fidelity or exile was alike rejected by one thousand Goths, who broke away before the treaty was signed, and boldly effected their retreat to the walls of Pavia. The spirit, as well as the situation of Aligern, prompted him to imitate rather than to bewail his brother: a strong and dextrous archer, he transpierced with a single arrow the armour and breast of his antagonist; and his military conduct defended Cumæ⁴⁵ above a year against the forces of the Romans. Their industry had scooped the Sibyll's cave⁴⁶ into a prodigious mine; combustible materials were introduced to consume the temporary props: the wall and the gate of Cumæ sunk into the cavern, but the ruins formed a deep and inaccessible precipice. On the fragment of a rock, Aligern stood alone and unshaken till he calmly surveyed the hopeless condition of his country, and judged it more honourable to be the friend of Narfes than the slave of the Franks. After the death of Teias, the Roman general separated his troops to reduce the cities of Italy; Lucca sustained a long and vigorous siege; and such was the humanity or the prudence of Narfes, that the repeated perfidy of the inhabitants could not provoke him to exact the forfeit lives of their hostages. These hostages were dismissed in

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safety; and their grateful zeal at length subdued the obstinacy of their countrymen⁴⁷.

Before Lucca had surrendered, Italy was overwhelmed by a new deluge of Barbarians. A feeble youth, the grandson of Clovis, reigned over the Austrasians or oriental Franks. The guardians of Theodebald entertained with coldness and reluctance the magnificent promises of the Gothic ambassadors. But the spirit of a martial people outstripped the timid counsels of the court: two brothers, Lothaire and Buccelin⁴⁸, the dukes of the Alemanni, stood forth as the leaders of the Italian war; and seventy-five thousand Germans descended in the autumn from the Rhætian Alps into the plain of Milan. The vanguard of the Roman army was stationed near the Po, under the conduct of Fulcaris, a bold Herulian, who rashly conceived, that personal bravery was the sole duty and merit of a commander. As he marched without order or precaution along the Æmilian way, an ambuscade of Franks suddenly rose from the amphitheatre of Parma: his troops were surprised and routed; but their leader refused to fly; declaring to the last moment, that death was less terrible than the angry countenance of Narfes. The death of Fulcaris, and the retreat of the surviving chiefs, decided the fluctuating and rebellious temper of the Goths; they flew to the standard of their deliverers, and admitted them into the cities which still resisted the arms of the Roman general. The conqueror of Italy opened a free pas-

sage to the irresistible torrent of Barbarians. They passed under the walls of Cesena, and answered by threats and reproaches the advice of Aligern, that the Gothic treasures could no longer repay the labour of an invasion. Two thousand Franks were destroyed by the skill and valour of Narses himself, who sallied from Rimini at the head of three hundred horse, to chastise the licentious rapine of their march. On the confines of Samnium, the two brothers divided their forces. With the right wing, Buccelin assumed the spoil of Campania, Lucania, and Bruttium: with the left, Lothaire accepted the plunder of Apulia and Calabria. They followed the coast of the Mediterranean and the Hadriatic, as far as Rhegium and Otranto, and the extreme lands of Italy were the term of their destructive progress. The Franks, who were Christians and Catholics, contented themselves with simple pillage and occasional murder. But the churches which their piety had spared, were stripped by the sacrilegious hands of the Alemanni, who sacrificed horses heads to their native deities of the woods and rivers⁴⁹: they melted or profaned the consecrated vessels, and the ruins of shrines and altars were stained with the blood of the faithful. Buccelin was actuated by ambition, and Lothaire by avarice. The former aspired to restore the Gothic kingdom: the latter, after a promise to his brother of speedy succours, returned by the same road to deposit his treasure beyond the Alps. The strength of their

CHAP. XLIII. armies was already wasted by the change of climate and contagion of disease: the Germans revelled in the vintage of Italy; and their own intemperance avenged in some degree the miseries of a defenceless people.

Defeat of the
Franks and
Alemanni by
Narſes,
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At the entrance of the ſpring, the Imperial troops, who had guarded the cities, aſſembled to the number of eighteen thouſand men, in the neighbourhood of Rome. Their winter hours had not been conſumed in idleneſs. By the command, and after the example of Narſes, they repeated each day their military exerciſe on foot and on horſeback, accuſtomed their ear to obey the ſound of the trumpet, and practiſed the ſteps and evolutions of the Pyrrhic dance. From the ſtreights of Sicily, Buccelin, with thirty thouſand Franks and Alemanni, ſlowly moved towards Capua, occupied with a wooden tower the bridge of Caſilinum, covered his right by the ſtream of the Vulturnus, and ſecured the reſt of his encampment, by a rampart of ſharp ſtakes, and a circle of waggonſ, whoſe wheels were buried in the earth. He impatiently expected the return of Lothaire; ignorant, alas! that his brother could never return, and that the chief and his army had been ſwept away by a ſtrange diſeaſe⁵⁰ on the banks of the lake Benacus, between Trent and Verona. The banners of Narſes ſoon approached the Vulturnus, and the eyes of Italy were anxiously fixed on the event of this final conteſt. Perhaps the talents of the Roman general were moſt conſpicuous in the calm operations

which precede the tumult of a battle. His skilful movements intercepted the subsistence of the Barbarian, deprived him of the advantage of the bridge and river, and in the choice of the ground and moment of action, reduced him to comply with the inclination of his enemy. On the morning of the important day, when the ranks were already formed, a servant, for some trivial fault, was killed by his master, one of the leaders of the Heruli. The justice or passion of Narfes was awakened: he summoned the offender to his presence, and without listening to his excuses, gave the signal to the minister of death. If the cruel master had not infringed the laws of his nation, this arbitrary execution was not less unjust, than it appears to have been imprudent. The Heruli felt the indignity; they halted: but the Roman general, without soothing their rage, or expecting their resolution, called aloud, as the trumpets sounded, that unless they hastened to occupy their place, they would lose the honour of the victory. His troops were disposed in a long front, the cavalry on the wings; in the centre, the heavy-armed foot; the archers and slingers in the rear. The Germans advanced in a sharp-pointed column, of the form of a triangle or solid wedge. They pierced the feeble centre of Narfes, who received them with a smile into the fatal snare, and directed his wings of cavalry insensibly to wheel on their flanks and encompass their rear. The host of the Franks and Alemanni consisted of infantry: a sword and

C H A P. XLIII. buckler hung by their side, and they used as their weapons of offence, a weighty hatchet, and a hooked javelin, which were only formidable in close combat, or at a short distance. The flower of the Roman archers, on horseback, and in complete armour, skirmished without peril round this immovable phalanx; supplied by active speed the deficiency of number; and aimed their arrows against a crowd of Barbarians, who, instead of a cuirass and helmet, were covered by a loose garment of fur or linen. They paused, they trembled, their ranks were confounded, and in the decisive moment the Heruli, preferring glory to revenge, charged with rapid violence the head of the column. Their leader, Sindbal, and Aligern, the Gothic prince, deserved the prize of superior valour; and their example incited the victorious troops to achieve with swords and spears the destruction of the enemy. Buccelin, and the greatest part of his army, perished on the field of battle, in the waters of the Volturnus, or by the hands of the enraged peasants: but it may seem incredible, that a victory⁵², which no more than five of the Alemanni survived, could be purchased with the loss of fourscore Romans. Seven thousand Goths, the relics of the war, defended the fortress of Campsa till the ensuing spring; and every messenger of Narfes announced the reduction of the Italian cities, whose names were corrupted by the ignorance or vanity of the Greeks⁵³. After the battle of Casilinum, Narfes entered the capital;

the arms and treasures of the Goths, the Franks, and the Alemanni, were displayed; his soldiers, with garlands in their hands, chanted the praises of the conqueror; and Rome, for the last time, beheld the semblance of a triumph.

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After a reign of sixty years, the throne of the Gothic kings was filled by the Exarchs of Ravenna, the representatives in peace and war of the emperor of the Romans. Their jurisdiction was soon reduced to the limits of a narrow province: but Narses himself, the first and most powerful of the Exarchs, administered above fifteen years the entire kingdom of Italy. Like Belisarius, he had deserved the honours of envy, calumny, and disgrace: but the favourite eunuch still enjoyed the confidence of Justinian, or the leader of a victorious army awed and repressed the ingratitude of a timid court. Yet it was not by weak and mischievous indulgence that Narses secured the attachment of his troops. Forgetful of the past, and regardless of the future, they abused the present hour of prosperity and peace. The cities of Italy resounded with the noise of drinking and dancing: the spoils of victory were wasted in sensual pleasures; and nothing (says Agathias) remained, unless to exchange their shields and helmets for the soft lute and the capacious hog'shead⁵⁴. In a manly oration, not unworthy of a Roman censor, the eunuch reprov- ed these disorderly vices, which sullied their fame and endangered their safety. The soldiers blushed and obeyed: discipline was confirmed,

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Italy,

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the fortifications were restored; a *duke* was stationed for the defence and military command of each of the principal cities⁵⁵; and the eye of Narses pervaded the ample prospect from Calabria to the Alps. The remains of the Gothic nation evacuated the country, or mingled with the people: the Franks, instead of revenging the death of Buccelin, abandoned, without a struggle, their Italian conquests: and the rebellious Sindbal, chief of the Heruli, was subdued, taken, and hung on a lofty gallows by the inflexible justice of the Exarch⁵⁶. The civil state of Italy, after the agitation of a long tempest, was fixed by a pragmatic sanction, which the emperor promulgated at the request of the pope. Justinian introduced his own jurisprudence into the schools and tribunals of the West: he ratified the acts of Theodoric and his immediate successors, but every deed was rescinded and abolished, which force had extorted, or fear had subscribed, under the usurpation of Totila. A moderate theory was framed to reconcile the rights of property with the safety of prescription, the claims of the state with the poverty of the people, and the pardon of offences with the interest of virtue and order of society. Under the Exarchs of Ravenna, Rome was degraded to the second rank. Yet the senators were gratified by the permission of visiting their estates in Italy, and of approaching without obstacle the throne of Constantinople: the regulation of weights and measures was delegated to the pope and senate; and the salaries of lawyers and phy-

ficians, of orators and grammarians, were destined to preserve or rekindle the light of science in the ancient capital. Justinian might dictate benevolent edicts", and Narses might second his wishes by the restoration of cities, and more especially of churches. But the power of kings is most effectual to destroy: and the twenty years of the Gothic war had consummated the distress and depopulation of Italy. As early as the fourth campaign, under the discipline of Belisarius himself, fifty thousand labourers died of hunger" in the narrow region of Picenum"; and a strict interpretation of the evidence of Procopius would swell the loss of Italy above the total sum of her present inhabitants".

I desire to believe, but I dare not affirm, that Belisarius sincerely rejoiced in the triumph of Narses. Yet the consciousness of his own exploits might teach him to esteem without jealousy the merit of a rival; and the repose of the aged warrior was crowned by a last victory which saved the emperor and the capital. The Barbarians who annually visited the provinces of Europe were less discouraged by some accidental defeats, than they were excited by the double hope of spoil and of subsidy. In the thirty-second winter of Justinian's reign, the Danube was deeply frozen: Zabergan led the cavalry of the Bulgarians, and his standard was followed by a promiscuous multitude of Slavonians. The savage chief passed without opposition the river and the mountains, spread his troops over Macedonia and Thrace, and advanced with no more than seven thousand

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horse to the long walls which should have defended the territory of Constantinople. But the works of man are impotent against the assaults of nature: a recent earthquake had shaken the foundations of the wall; and the forces of the empire were employed on the distant frontiers of Italy, Africa, and Persia. The seven *schools*⁶¹, or companies of the guards or domestic troops, had been augmented to the number of five thousand five hundred men, whose ordinary station was in the peaceful cities of Asia. But the places of the brave Armenians were insensibly supplied by lazy citizens, who purchased an exemption from the duties of civil life, without being exposed to the dangers of military service. Of such soldiers, few could be tempted to sally from the gates; and none could be persuaded to remain in the field, unless they wanted strength and speed to escape from the Bulgarians. The report of the fugitives exaggerated the numbers and fierceness of an enemy, who had polluted holy virgins, and abandoned new-born infants to the dogs and vultures; a crowd of rustics, imploring food and protection, increased the consternation of the city, and the tents of Zabergan were pitched at the distance of twenty miles⁶², on the banks of a small river, which encircles Melanthias, and afterwards falls into the Propontis⁶³. Justinian trembled: and those who had only seen the emperor in his old age, were pleased to suppose, that he had *lost* the alacrity and vigour of his youth. By his command, the vessels of gold and silver were removed

removed from the churches in the neighbourhood, and even the suburbs, of Constantinople: the ramparts were lined with trembling spectators: the golden gate was crowded with useless generals and tribunes, and the senate shared the fatigues and the apprehensions of the populace.

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But the eyes of the prince and people were directed to a feeble veteran, who was compelled by the public danger to resume the armour in which he had entered Carthage and defended Rome. The horses of the royal stables, of private citizens, and even of the circus, were hastily collected; the emulation of the old and young was roused by the name of Belisarius, and his first encampment was in the presence of a victorious enemy. His prudence, and the labour of the friendly peasants, secured, with a ditch and rampart, the repose of the night: innumerable fires, and clouds of dust, were artfully contrived to magnify the opinion of his strength: his soldiers suddenly passed from despondency to presumption; and, while ten thousand voices demanded the battle, Belisarius dissembled his knowledge, that in the hour of trial he must depend on the firmness of three hundred veterans. The next morning, the Bulgarian cavalry advanced to the charge. But they heard the shouts of multitudes, they beheld the arms and discipline of the front; they were assaulted on the flanks by two ambuscades which rose from the woods; their foremost warriors fell by the hand of the aged hero and his guards; and the swiftness of their

Last victory
of Belisarius.

C H A P. XLIII. evolutions was rendered useless by the close attack and rapid pursuit of the Romans. In this action (so speedy was their flight) the Bulgarians lost only four hundred horse; but Constantinople was saved; and Zabergan, who felt the hand of a master, withdrew to a respectful distance. But his friends were numerous in the councils of the emperor, and Belisarius obeyed with reluctance, the commands of envy and Justinian, which forbade him to achieve the deliverance of his country. On his return to the city, the people, still conscious of their danger, accompanied his triumph with acclamations of joy and gratitude, which were imputed as a crime to the victorious general. But when he entered the palace, the courtiers were silent, and the emperor, after a cold and thankless embrace, dismissed him to mingle with the train of slaves. Yet so deep was the impression of his glory on the minds of men, that Justinian, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, was encouraged to advance near forty miles from the capital, and to inspect in person the restoration of the long wall. The Bulgarians wasted the summer in the plains of Thrace; but they were inclined to peace by the failure of their rash attempts on Greece and the Chersonesus. A menace of killing their prisoners quickened the payment of heavy ransoms; and the departure of Zabergan was hastened by the report, that double-prowed vessels were built on the Danube to intercept his passage. The danger was soon forgotten; and a vain question,

whether their sovereign had shewn more wisdom or weakness, amused the idleness of the city C H A P. XLIII.

About two years after the last victory of Belisarius, the emperor returned from a Thracian journey of health, or business, or devotion. His disgrace and death.
A. D. 561. Justinian was afflicted by a pain in his head; and his private entry countenanced the rumour of his death. Before the third hour of the day, the bakers shops were plundered of their bread, the houses were shut, and every citizen, with hope or terror, prepared for the impending tumult. The senators themselves, fearful and suspicious, were convened at the ninth hour; and the præfect received their commands to visit every quarter of the city, and proclaim a general illumination for the recovery of the emperor's health. The ferment subsided; but every accident betrayed the impotence of the government and the factious temper of the people: the guards were disposed to mutiny as often as their quarters were changed or their pay was withheld: the frequent calamities of fires and earthquakes afforded the opportunities of disorder; the disputes of the blues and greens, of the orthodox and heretics degenerated into bloody battles; and, in the presence of the Persian ambassador, Justinian blushed for himself and for his subjects. Capricious pardon and arbitrary punishment embittered the irksomeness and discontent of a long reign: a conspiracy was formed in the palace; and, unless we are deceived by the names of Marcellus and Sergius, the most virtuous and the most profligate

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of the courtiers were associated in the same designs. They had fixed the time of the execution; their rank gave them access to the royal banquet; and their black slaves⁶⁵ were stationed in the vestibule and porticos to announce the death of the tyrant, and to excite a sedition in the capital. But the indiscretion of an accomplice saved the poor remnant of the days of Justinian. The conspirators were detected and seized, with daggers hidden under their garments: Marcellus died by his own hand, and Sergius was dragged from the sanctuary⁶⁶. Pressed by remorse, or tempted by the hopes of safety, he accused two officers of the household of Belisarius; and torture forced them to declare that they had acted according to the secret instructions of their patron⁶⁷. Posterity will not hastily believe that an hero who, in the vigour of life, had disdained the fairest offers of ambition and revenge, should stoop to the murder of his prince, whom he could not long expect to survive. His followers were impatient to fly; but flight must have been supported by rebellion, and he had lived enough for nature and for glory. Belisarius appeared before the council with less fear than indignation: after forty years service, the emperor had prejudged his guilt; and injustice was sanctified by the presence and authority of the patriarch. The life of Belisarius was graciously spared; but his fortunes were sequestered, and, from December to July, he was guarded as a prisoner in his own palace. At length his innocence was acknow-

A. D. 563,
December 5.

A. D. 564,
July 19.

ledged; his freedom and honours were restored; and death, which might be hastened by resentment and grief, removed him from the world about eight months after his deliverance. The name of Belisarius can never die: but instead of the funeral, the monuments, the statues, so justly due to his memory, I only read, that his treasures, the spoils of the Goths and Vandals, were immediately confiscated by the emperor. Some decent portion was reserved, however, for the use of his widow; and as Antonina had much to repent, she devoted the last remains of her life and fortune to the foundation of a convent. Such is the simple and genuine narrative of the fall of Belisarius and the ingratitude of Justinian⁶⁶. That he was deprived of his eyes, and reduced by envy to beg his bread, "Give a penny to Belisarius the general!" is a fiction of later times⁶⁷, which has obtained credit, or rather favour, as a strange example of the vicissitudes of fortune⁶⁸.

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A. D. 565,
March 13.

If the emperor could rejoice in the death of Belisarius, he enjoyed the base satisfaction only eight months, the last period of a reign of thirty-eight, and a life of eighty-three years. It would be difficult to trace the character of a prince who is not the most conspicuous object of his own times: but the confessions of an enemy may be received as the safest evidence of his virtues. The resemblance of Justinian to the bust of Domitian, is maliciously urged⁶⁹; with the acknowledgment, however, of a well-propor-

Death and
character of
Justinian,
A. D. 565,
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tioned figure, a ruddy complexion, and a pleasing countenance. The emperor was easy of access, patient of hearing, courteous and affable in discourse, and a master of the angry passions, which rage with such destructive violence in the breast of a despot. Procopius praises his temper to reproach him with calm and deliberate cruelty; but in the conspiracies which attacked his authority and person, a more candid judge will approve the justice, or admire the clemency of Justinian. He excelled in the private virtues of chastity and temperance: but the impartial love of beauty would have been less mischievous, than his conjugal tenderness for Theodora; and his abstemious diet was regulated, not by the prudence of a philosopher, but the superstition of a monk. His repasts were short and frugal: on solemn fasts, he contented himself with water and vegetables; and such was his strength, as well as fervour, that he frequently passed two days and as many nights, without tasting any food. The measure of his sleep was not less rigorous: after the repose of a single hour, the body was awakened by the soul, and, to the astonishment of his chamberlains, Justinian walked or studied till the morning light. Such restless application prolonged his time for the acquisition of knowledge⁷² and the dispatch of business; and he might seriously deserve the reproach of confounding, by minute and preposterous diligence, the general order of his administration. The emperor professed himself a musician and architect, a poet

and philosopher, a lawyer and theologian; and if he failed in the enterprize of reconciling the Christian sects, the review of the Roman jurisprudence is a noble monument of his spirit and industry. In the government of the empire, he was less wise or less successful; the age was unfortunate; the people was oppressed and discontented; Theodora abused her power; a succession of bad ministers disgraced his judgment; and Justinian was neither beloved in his life, nor regretted at his death. The love of fame was deeply implanted in his breast, but he condescended to the poor ambition of titles, honours, and contemporary praise; and while he laboured to fix the admiration, he forfeited the esteem and affection of the Romans. The design of the African and Italian wars was boldly conceived and executed: and his penetration discovered the talents of Belisarius in the camp, of Narses in the palace. But the name of the emperor is eclipsed by the names of his victorious generals; and Belisarius still lives, to upbraid the envy and ingratitude of his sovereign. The partial favour of mankind applauds the genius of a conqueror, who leads and directs his subjects in the exercise of arms. The characters of Philip the Second and of Justinian are distinguished by the cold ambition which delights in war, and declines the dangers of the field. Yet a colossal statue of bronze represented the emperor on horseback, preparing to march against the Persians in the habit and armour of Achilles. In the great square

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before the church of St. Sophia, this monument was raised on a brass column and a stone pedestal of seven steps; and the pillar of Theodosius, which weighed seven thousand four hundred pounds of silver, was removed from the same place by the avarice and vanity of Justinian. Future princes were more just or indulgent to *his* memory; the elder Andronicus, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, repaired and beautified his equestrian statue: since the fall of the empire, it has been melted into cannon by the victorious Turks ⁷³.

I shall conclude this chapter with the comets, the earthquakes, and the plague, which astonished or afflicted the age of Justinian.

Comets,
A. D.
534. 539.

I. In the fifth year of his reign, and in the month of September, a comet ⁷⁴ was seen during twenty days in the western quarter of the heavens, and which shot its rays into the north. Eight years afterwards, while the sun was in Capricorn, another comet appeared to follow in the Sagitary: the size was gradually encreasing; the head was in the east, the tail in the west, and it remained visible above forty days. The nations, who gazed with astonishment, expected wars and calamities from their baleful influence; and these expectations were abundantly fulfilled. The astronomers dissembled their ignorance of the nature of these blazing stars, which they affected to represent as the floating meteors of the air; and few among them embraced the simple notion of Seneca and the Chaldæans, that

they are only planets of a longer period and more eccentric motion ⁷⁵. Time and science have justified the conjectures and predictions of the Roman sage: the telescope has opened new worlds to the eyes of astronomers ⁷⁶; and, in the narrow space of history and fable, one and the same comet is already found to have revisited the earth in *seven* equal revolutions of five hundred and seventy-five years. The *first* ⁷⁷, which ascends beyond the Christian æra one thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven years, is coëval with Ogyges the father of Grecian antiquity. And this appearance explains the tradition which Varro has preserved, that under his reign, the planet Venus changed her colour, size, figure, and course; a prodigy, without example either in past or succeeding ages ⁷⁸. The *second* visit, in the year eleven hundred and ninety-three, is darkly implied in the fable of Electra the seventh of the Pleiads, who have been reduced to six since the time of the Trojan war. That nymph, the wife of Dardanus, was unable to support the ruin of her country; she abandoned the dances of her sister orbs, fled from the zodiac to the north pole, and obtained, from her dishevelled locks, the name of the *comet*. The *third* period expires in the year six hundred and eighteen, a date that exactly agrees with the tremendous comet of the Sibyll, and perhaps of Pliny, which arose in the West, two generations before the reign of Cyrus. The *fourth* apparition, forty-four years before the birth of Christ, is of all others the most splendid and important. After the

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death of Cæsar, a long-haired star was conspicuous to Rome and to the nations, during the games which were exhibited by young Octavian, in honour of Venus and his uncle. The vulgar opinion, that it conveyed to heaven the divine soul of the dictator, was cherished and consecrated by the piety of a statesman: while his secret superstition referred the comet to the glory of his own times⁷⁹. The *fifth* visit has been already ascribed to the fifth year of Justinian, which coincides with the five hundred and thirty-first of the Christian æra. And it may deserve notice, that in this, as in the preceding instance, the comet was followed, though at a longer interval, by a remarkable paleness of the sun. The *sixth* return, in the year eleven hundred and six, is recorded by the chronicles of Europe and China; and in the first fervour of the Crusades, the Christians and the Mahometans might surmise with equal reason, that it portended the destruction of the Infidels. The *seventh* phænomenon, of one thousand six hundred and eighty, was presented to the eyes of an enlightened age⁸⁰. The philosophy of Bayle dispelled a prejudice which Milton's muse had so recently adorned, that the comet "from its horrid hair shakes pestilence and war⁸¹." Its road in the heavens was observed with exquisite skill by Flamsteed and Cassini; and the mathematical science of Bernoulli, Newton, and Halley, investigated the laws of its revolutions. At the *eighth* period, in the year two thousand three hundred and fifty-five, their calculations may perhaps be

verified by the astronomers of some future capital in the Siberian or American wilderness. C H A P. XLIII.

II. The near approach of a comet may injure or destroy the globe which we inhabit; but the changes on its surface have been hitherto produced by the actions of vulcanos and earthquakes⁸². The nature of the soil may indicate the countries most exposed to these formidable concussions, since they are caused by subterraneous fires, and such fires are kindled by the union and fermentation of iron and sulphur. But their times and effects appear to lie beyond the reach of human curiosity, and the philosopher will discreetly abstain from the prediction of earthquakes, till he has counted the drops of water that silently filtrate on the inflammable mineral, and measured the caverns which encrease by resistance the explosion of the imprisoned air. Without assigning the cause, history will distinguish the periods in which these calamitous events have been rare or frequent, and will observe, that this fever of the earth raged with uncommon violence during the reign of Justinian⁸³. Each year is marked by the repetition of earthquakes, of such duration, that Constantinople has been shaken above forty days; of such extent, that the shock has been communicated to the whole surface of the globe, or at least of the Roman empire. An impulsive or vibratory motion was felt: enormous chasms were opened, huge and heavy bodies were discharged into the air, the sea alternately advanced and retreated beyond its

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A. D. 529,
May 20.

A. D. 551
July 9.

ordinary bounds, and a mountain was torn from Libanus⁸⁴, and cast into the waves, where it protected, as a mole, the new harbour of Bortrys⁸⁵ in Phœnicia. The stroke that agitates an ant-hill, may crush the insect-myriads in the dust; yet truth must extort a confession, that man has industriously laboured for his own destruction. The institution of great cities, which include a nation within the limits of a wall, almost realizes the wish of Caligula, that the Roman people had but one neck. Two hundred and fifty thousand persons are said to have perished in the earthquake of Antioch, whose domestic multitudes were swelled by the conflux of strangers to the festival of the Ascension. The loss of Berytus⁸⁶ was of smaller account, but of much greater value. That city, on the coast of Phœnicia, was illustrated by the study of the civil law, which opened the surest road to wealth and dignity: the schools of Berytus were filled with the rising spirits of the age, and many a youth was lost in the earthquake, who might have lived to be the scourge or the guardian of his country. In these disasters, the architect becomes the enemy of mankind. The hut of a savage, or the tent of an Arab, may be thrown down without injury to the inhabitant; and the Peruvians had reason to deride the folly of their Spanish conquerors, who with so much cost and labour erected their own sepulchres. The rich marbles of a patrician are dashed on his own head: a whole people is buried under the ruins of public and private edifices, and

the conflagration is kindled and propagated by the innumerable fires which are necessary for the subsistence and manufactures of a great city. Instead of the mutual sympathy which might comfort and assist the distressed, they dreadfully experience the vices and passions which are released from the fear of punishment: the tottering houses are pilaged by intrepid avarice; revenge embraces the moment, and selects the victim; and the earth often swallows the assassin or the ravisher in the consummation of their crimes. Superstition involves the present danger with invisible terrors; and if the image of death may sometimes be subservient to the virtue or repentance of individuals, an affrighted people is more forcibly moved to expect the end of the world, or to deprecate with servile homage the wrath of an avenging Deity.

III. Æthiopia and Egypt have been stigmatised in every age, as the original source and seminary of the plague⁸⁷. In a damp, hot, stagnating air, this African fever is generated from the putrefaction of animal substances, and especially from the swarms of locusts, not less destructive to mankind in their death than in their lives. The fatal disease which depopulated the earth in the time of Justinian and his successors⁸⁸, first appeared in the neighbourhood of Pelusium, between the Serbonian bog and the eastern channel of the Nile. From thence, tracing as it were a double path, it spread to the East, over Syria, Persia, and the Indies, and

C H A P.
XLIII.

Plague—its
origin and
nature,
A. D. 542.

C H A P. XLIII. penetrated to the West, along the coast of Africa, and over the continent of Europe. In the spring of the second year, Constantinople, during three or four months, was visited by the pestilence: and Procopius, who observed its progress and symptoms with the eyes of a physician⁸⁹, has emulated the skill and diligence of Thucydides in the description of the plague of Athens⁹⁰. The infection was sometimes announced by the visions of a distempered fancy, and the victim despaired as soon as he had heard the menace and felt the stroke of an invisible spectre. But the greater number, in their beds, in the streets, in their usual occupation, were surprised by a slight fever; so slight indeed, that neither the pulse nor the colour of the patient gave any signs of the approaching danger. The same, the next, or the succeeding day, it was declared by the swelling of the glands, particularly those of the groin, of the arm-pits, and under the ear; and when these bubos or tumours were opened, they were found to contain a *coal*, or black substance, of the size of a lentil. If they came to a just swelling and suppuration, the patient was saved by this kind and natural discharge of the morbid humour. But if they continued hard and dry, a mortification quickly ensued, and the fifth day was commonly the term of his life. The fever was often accompanied with lethargy or delirium; the bodies of the sick were covered with black pustules or carbuncles, the symptoms of immediate death;

and in the constitutions too feeble to produce an eruption, the vomiting of blood was followed by a mortification of the bowels. To pregnant women the plague was generally mortal: yet one infant was drawn alive from his dead mother, and three mothers survived the loss of their infected foetus. Youth was the most perilous season; and the female sex was less susceptible than the male: but every rank and profession was attacked with indiscriminate rage, and many of those who escaped were deprived of the use of their speech, without being secure from a return of the disorder". The physicians of Constantinople were zealous and skilful: but their art was baffled by the various symptoms and pertinacious vehemence of the disease: the same remedies were productive of contrary effects, and the event capriciously disappointed their prognostics of death or recovery. The order of funerals, and the right of sepulchres, were confounded; those who were left without friends or servants, lay unburied in the streets or in their desolate houses, and a magistrate was authorised to collect the promiscuous heaps of dead bodies, to transport them by land or water, and to inter them in deep pits beyond the precincts of the city. Their own danger, and the prospect of public distress, awakened some remorse in the minds of the most vicious of mankind: the confidence of health again revived their passions and habits; but philosophy must disdain the observation of Procopius, that the lives of such men

C H A P.
XLIII.

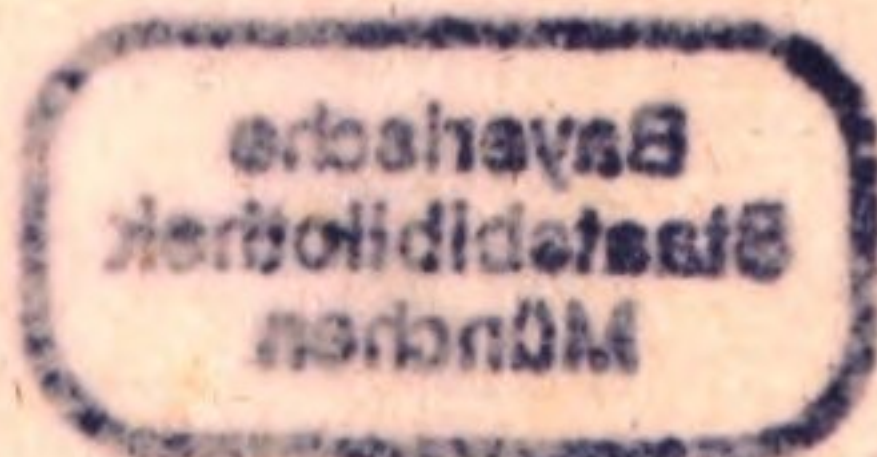
were guarded by the peculiar favour of fortune or providence. He forgot, or perhaps he secretly recollected, that the plague had touched the person of Justinian himself: but the abstemious diet of the emperor may suggest, as in the case of Socrates, a more rational and honourable cause for his recovery ⁹². During his sickness, the public consternation was expressed in the habits of the citizens; and their idleness and despondence occasioned a general scarcity in the capital of the East.

Extent and
duration,
A. D.
542—591.

Contagion is the inseparable symptom of the plague; which, by mutual respiration, is transfused from the infected persons to the lungs and stomach of those who approach them. While philosophers believe and tremble, it is singular, that the existence of a real danger should have been denied by a people most prone to vain and imaginary terrors ⁹³. Yet the fellow-citizens of Procopius were satisfied, by some short and partial experience, that the infection could not be gained by the closest conversation ⁹⁴; and this persuasion might support the assiduity of friends or physicians in the care of the sick, whom inhuman prudence would have condemned to solitude and despair. But the fatal security, like the predestination of the Turks, must have aided the progress of the contagion; and those salutary precautions to which Europe is indebted for her safety, were unknown to the government of Justinian. No restraints were imposed on the free and frequent intercourse of the Roman provinces:

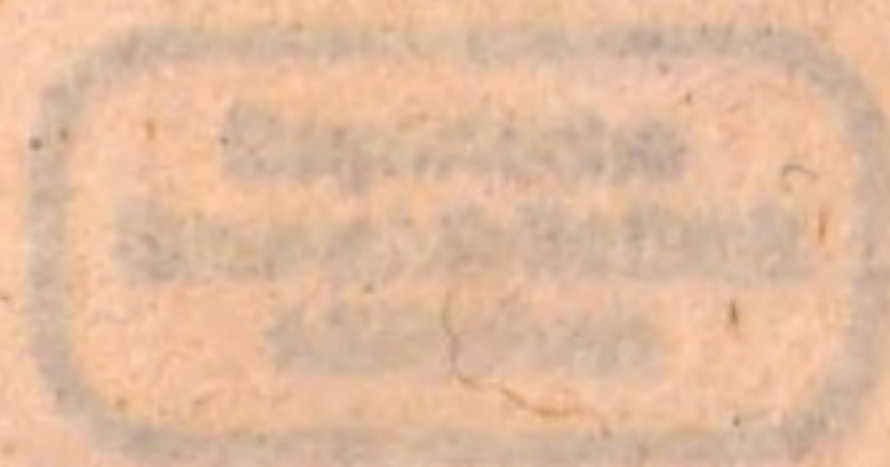
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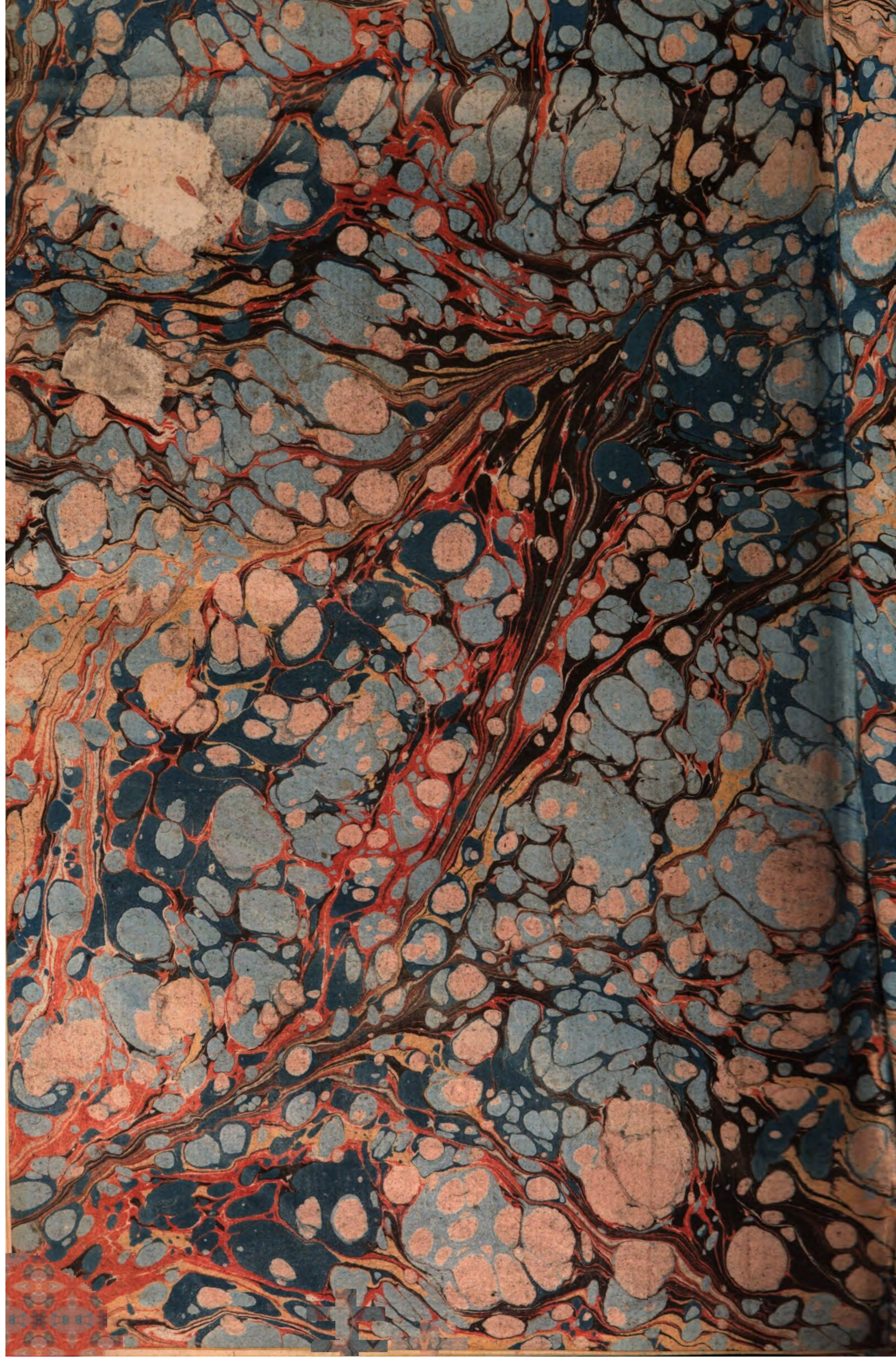
from Persia to France, the nations were mingled and infected by wars and emigrations; and the pestilential odour which lurks for years in a bale of cotton, was imported, by the abuse of trade, into the most distant regions. The mode of its propagation is explained by the remark of Procopius himself, that it always spread from the sea-coast to the inland country: the most sequestered islands and mountains were successively visited; the places which had escaped the fury of its first passage, were alone exposed to the contagion of the ensuing year. The winds might diffuse that subtle venom; but unless the atmosphere be previously disposed for its reception, the plague would soon expire in the cold or temperate climates of the earth. Such was the universal corruption of the air, that the pestilence which burst forth in the fifteenth year of Justinian was not checked or alleviated by any difference of the seasons. In time, its first malignity was abated and dispersed; the disease alternately languished and revived; but it was not till the end of a calamitous period of fifty-two years, that mankind recovered their health, or the air resumed its pure and salubrious quality. No facts have been preserved to sustain an account, or even a conjecture, of the numbers that perished in this extraordinary mortality. I only find, that during three months, five, and at length ten, thousand persons died each day at Constantinople; that many cities of the East were left vacant, and that in several districts of Italy the harvest

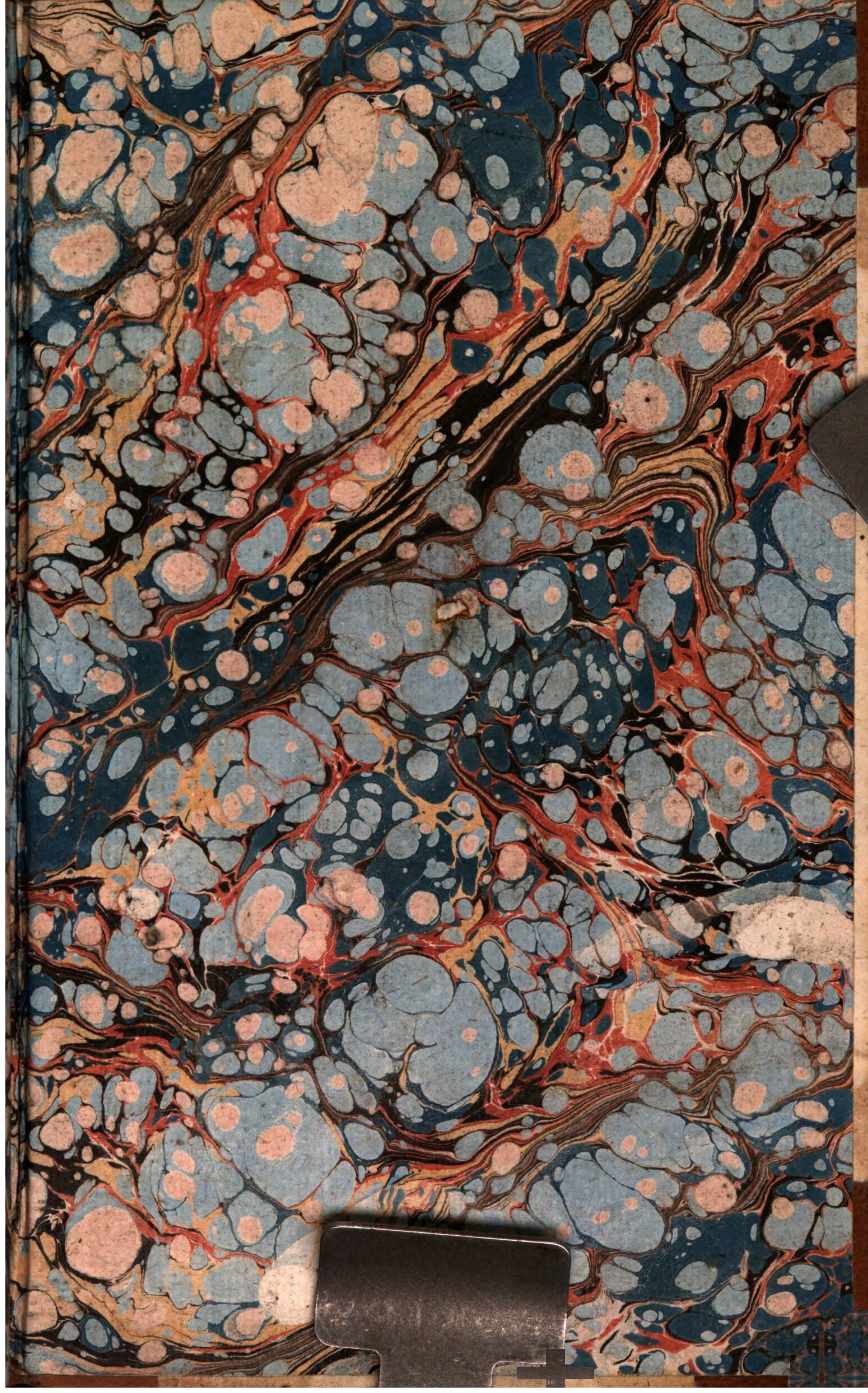


CHAP. and the vintage withered on the ground. The
XLIII. triple scourge of war, pestilence, and famine, afflicted the subjects of Justinian, and his reign is disgraced by a visible decrease of the human species, which has never been repaired in some of the fairest countries of the globe."

and the strange whirled on the ground. The
 trip, however, was, persistence, and having af-
 fected the waters of Jullian, and the sign is
 (figural), a visible decrease of the human po-
 tency which has never been equaled in some of
 the latest countries of the globe.







Gibbon, Edward,

The History Of The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire

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